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THE LIFE OF JESUS

BY
HARRIS FRANKLIN RALL

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THY KINGDOM COME ON EARTH

The kingdom of God does not complete itself in the redemption of the individual. It includes the individual and infinitely more. The Kingdom means that some day science and society, commerce and civics and letters and trade shall be sweetened, purified, and uplifted till they are in happy harmony with the will and purpose of the divine Father. Only so can there be anything like an adequate answer to the first petition of our Lord's Prayer. "Thy kingdom come and thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven."

Jesus clearly intended that his disciples should interest themselves in the temporal and earthly aspects of the heavenly Father's dominion and power. They are to pray for the coming of his Kingdom, and the accomplishment of his will on earth, even as they pray for daily bread or for the forgiveness of sin. "Thy kingdom come. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins." To pray thus sincerely and intelligently presupposes active participation in the working program of the Kingdom; that is, in all those activities making for that transformation and reconstruction of life through which alone individuals and organized society can be brought into accord with the will and the rule of God.

Too often in human history the sharp contrast between actual conditions and the higher demands of the Christian ideal has discouraged those upon whom rested the responsibility for making that ideal real. A short-range view of life has obscured the actual growth of the Kingdom which the larger perspective of history reveals. In the face of the overwhelming preponderance of sin and selfishness in the world the Christian Church has again and again contented itself with snatching as many brands as possible from the burning, without, at the same time, seeking to organize the

constructive forces of life and of society for the seemingly impossible task of putting out the conflagration. Thus the actual process of the Kingdom's coming among men has proceeded for the most part "without observation," like the first growth of the seed that has been buried in the soil.

It is possible to-day, in the light of the completed records of the Old and New Testaments and the subsequent history of the Christian centuries, to discover definite stages of advance with successive landmarks of progress in the gradual establishment of the reign of God in individual lives and in the institutions of mankind. Such a survey of progress already achieved should hearten the organized Christian forces in their forward look and their endeavor to establish still more firmly among men the principles and ideals of the Kingdom. It should encourage the individual to redouble his efforts and inspire in him an unfaltering confidence in the ultimate realization and triumph of God's rule. Herein lies the purpose of the special course of study in the Development of the Kingdom of God in which this volume constitutes one textbook. Part of the course originally was issued in periodical form, providing adult Bible classes with consecutive studies covering a period of three years. These studies have been carefully revised and are now offered for wider use in a series of convenient and inexpensive textbooks.

Beginning with a brief consideration of the fundamentals of religion and the nature of man and of Deity, the studies trace the development of religious experience and ideas among the Hebrews and the Jewish people down to the beginning of the Christian era. This early period, covering the development of the Kingdom in Old Testament times, is presented in two volumes of twenty-six study chapters each, the division being made at the point in the historical development following the rise of eighth-century prophetism and the fall of Samaria. In similar manner two volumes are devoted to the Life and Teachings of Jesus which are assumed to be of central importance in the forward and upward movement of humanity.

Subsequent studies present in two volumes a survey of

the Development of the Kingdom since the time of Christ, including a discussion of those social-religious movements of the present day, the support and inspiration for which are to be found primarily in the Christian conception of God and the world. The concluding volume of the series is entitled The Christian Hope and presents in constructive form the abiding faith of the Christian fellowship in the final triumph of the kingdom of God.

It is confidently expected that in their revised form these studies will serve a two-fold purpose. As elective courses for adult Bible classes interested in this vital and most fascinating of all studies, their usefulness has been much enhanced. At the same time they are intended to meet the increasing demand for modern textbooks written in scholarly spirit but popular style for preparatory and high schools and for advanced groups in week-day religious instruction in local parishes. That they are admirably suited for either purpose will be evident from an examination of any one of the volumes in the series.

THE EDITORS.

A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR

THE character of this volume is to be understood in the light of its purpose. It does not aim to include every item of the gospel records. It does not try to give all possible knowledge about customs and places. It seeks to utilize assured critical results, but it does not give critical studies. Though interested in spiritual values, its purpose is not that of a devotional handbook. Nor is its chief concern the attempt to arrange all the gospel incidents in chronological order.

This volume is one of a series of biblical studies under the general title, "The Development of the Kingdom of God." Back of that title lies the conviction that history is the carrying out of a great purpose of God. Jesus of Nazareth has been the greatest creative force in this movement of humanity. It is this place which he holds in the

life and faith of the world that gives the supreme reason for our study, and determines the questions that we ask. Under what conditions did Jesus begin his work? What purpose did he set before him? How did he plan its achievement? What course did he pursue? What was the issue of his life? What manner of man was he?

Such a study will be historical; it must see Jesus in the movement of history and in the setting of his day. It must be vital, looking beneath words and incidents to deeper meanings. It must be dynamic; not painting a mediæval saint, beautiful but lifeless upon his background of gold, but showing us that Person from whom the potent forces of human history have come.

In revising these studies the author has had constantly in mind their intended wider uses and value for advanced classes in preparatory and high schools and the first year in college, where there has been an increasing demand for texts which, while scholarly in treatment and modern in standpoint, shall be simpler and briefer than most books now available. A companion volume is being issued on the teachings of Jesus by the same author. Constant reference to the latter will greatly aid in the study of Jesus' life. The world has had no other leader in whom life and Word are so absolutely one, and each so necessary to the understanding of the other.

HARRIS FRANKLIN RALL.

This map is one of the Kent-Madsen Series, a complete set of which may be obtained in colors, wall size, for use in the Sunday school class room. Prices will be furnished by the publishers on application.

PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF JESUS (4 B.C.-30 A.D.)

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Suggestions for Study

At the close of each chapter the student will find the Directions for Study for that chapter. Look at these before beginning the reading of any chapter. A few general suggestions are here given.

First, gain a clear idea of the purpose of the book. It is not a study of the details of Jesus' words and acts. Rather we are looking at his life as a whole, as a great deed for the advancement of God's kingdom. We are studying it as a force in history, as the greatest force.

Keeping this theme in mind, as you begin each chapter note first how it belongs to the movement as a whole, how it is connected with what goes before, and what the new interest is which it takes up. This is usually suggested in the opening paragraph, which should have careful attention.

Read the chapter as a whole, if possible at one sitting. Do not try to grasp all the facts at once, but get the drift of the argument and the outline of its thought, so that you can put it into a few words.

Now return for a more careful study. Give especial attention to the Scripture passages that are assigned in the Directions for Study and to the Bible references in the text. Look all these up and read them, forming your own judgment upon the subjects discussed. Remember that your principal study is not the author and his opinions, but the Gospels themselves.

Consider thoughtfully the questions raised in the Directions for Study, and formulate carefully your answers.

Write, and write constantly. Keep a special note-book for this study. Write out the answers to the questions indicated. Write a summary of the thought and argument of each chapter in your own words. Nothing is more helpful to the student than constant writing, especially if he be studying alone. Writing compels more careful and thorough study. By writing we clarify our thought and test our knowledge; we find out what we know when we try to tell it. And writing fixes in mind what we are studying.

Apply. Ask yourself constantly what this all means for yourself and for the life of the world about you. It will not only mean profit to yourself, but give life and zest to all your study.

CHAPTER I

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

Jesus and the Kingdom of God

The thought of the kingdom of God is one of the greatest ideas that has ever stirred the hearts of men. Science tells us how the worlds came into being, and how the flaming suns shall some time turn cold. History records the rise and fall of nations, the migrations of peoples and their endless struggles. But when we ask what all this means, science and history have no answer. Nor is that answer easy to find elsewhere. The world seems a tangle of happenings, a ceaseless strife of good and evil that goes nowhere and means nothing.

Long years ago the prophets of Israel faced this same question and gave their answer. They saw the same evil and the same struggle, but they declared that a day of Jehovah was coming, a day in which the evil should be overthrown and the good should triumph. Out of their vision has come the Christian thought of the kingdom of God upon earth. It is the conviction that history has a meaning, that it is being shaped by the purpose of God. Slowly, through ages of ignorance and strife that are not yet past, men have been coming to see God and to know his will. Slowly God has been lifting men into fellowship with himself and by his Spirit dwelling in the world has been making over human relations and institutions. The final goal of all this is the kingdom of God, the rule of peace and righteousness of which we see the beginnings.

We are to study the life of Jesus as a part of this great world-movement of the Kingdom. We are to ask not simply what Jesus did and what he said, but how his life counted in forwarding this movement. All this makes it

plain that we cannot study the life of Jesus as though it stood alone. Unique though he was, Jesus did not stand apart. First, he belongs to the past, to the history of his own people; he builds upon what has gone before, especially on the prophets, and declares that all this is fulfilled in him. Second, he belongs to the world of his own day, the world of Roman law and Grecian speech and Jewish life. If we are to understand the life of Jesus, we must study the world to which he came and in which he did his work. To this study the first chapters will be given.

The Two Centuries Before Christ

Every one knows that it is necessary to study the Old Testament in order to understand the New, but few realize how important it is to study the period between the Old and the New. Turn over the pages of the Gospels and see the picture of Jewish life reflected there. Here are certain classes and parties that are referred to: Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees, Zealots. The temple is still here, but the center is now the synagogue. We find a strong interest in certain religious ideas: heaven, hell, resurrection, judgment, future life, demons, angels. Now turn back to the Old Testament and search for these names and ideas. They are almost wholly lacking. The period between the Old and New Testaments has sometimes been called the "four centuries of silence." That is a great error. This was not a time of silence, but one of momentous changes in which God was working among men and speaking to them. The last of the Old Testament writings reach down to the second century before Christ instead of the fourth. Strictly speaking, indeed, our subject should be "The Two Centuries Before Christ."

Our Sources of Information.—There are a number of writings from which we may learn about this interesting period. (1) The book of Daniel gives us a picture of the hopes that stirred men's hearts at this time. (2) Outside the Bible we turn to the so-called Jewish Apocrypha, especially the First and Second Maccabees. The Apocrypha

are Jewish writings not included by Protestants in the sacred canon, though Luther's Bible and the Anglican Church both include them as a kind of appendix to the Old Testament to be read "for example of life and instruction of manners." (3) Besides the Apocrypha we have certain other Jewish writings known as Pseudepigrapha, written in the time from 200 B. C. to 100 A. D. These writings are mainly apocalypses, or "revelations," picturing the future deliverance which Jehovah is to bring. (4) Finally we have the works of the Jewish historian, Josephus.

The Story of the Maccabees

Hellenizing the East.—The story of the Maccabees is one of the most thrilling chapters in the history of man's fight for freedom. Nearly 350 years before Christ Alexander of Macedon had started to conquer the world. But this general was not simply interested in conquest of arms. He wanted Greek culture to rule; he wanted the people of the East to receive the language of Greece, its customs, its religion. The work went on after his death, and everywhere with success. The Jews did not escape this influence. Those that were scattered abroad naturally learned the Greek tongue and the Old Testament was translated into that language. Palestine itself felt the movement. But it was not simply a question of language; it was a question whether the Jews should give up their ancient faith for the new customs and ideas. There were not a few who were ready to do this, and they included prominent and influential people, the wealthy and aristocratic sections with many of the priests. To these men it seemed the way to favor with the ruling powers, the door to position and fortune.

Palestine was at this time under Syria, one of the divisions into which Alexander's empire had fallen, and Antiochus Epiphanes had just come to Syria's throne, B. C. 175. Energetic, ambitious, arrogant, ruthless, his great ambition was to Hellenize his whole realm. He found a ready helper in the high priest Jason, a renegade

who had supplanted his own brother, the pious Onias, by the simple means of offering Antiochus a hundred and fifty thousand dollars for this office. This Jason pushed the work of Hellenizing. "He eagerly established a Greek place of exercise under the citadel itself; and caused the noblest of the young men to wear a Greek cap. And thus there was an extreme of Greek fashions, and an advance of an alien religion, by reason of the exceeding profaneness of Jason, that ungodly man and no high priest; so that the priests had no more any zeal for the service of the altar: but despising the sanctuary, and neglecting the sacrifices, they hastened to enjoy that which was unlawfully provided in the palæstra, after the summons of the discus; making of no account the honors of their fathers, and thinking the glories of the Greeks best of all." (2 Maccabees 4. 12-15.)

The Persecution of the Jews.—For centuries the leaders of Israel had fought to preserve her faith and to keep it pure from the contaminating influences of the lower religions around about her. Now it seemed as though that faith was to be lost in the mixture of low ideals and superstitious practices which were soon to be the common life of the Greek-Roman world. Her leaders, the priests, were faithless. The king was using every influence to bring about the change. Then suddenly the tide turned. Antiochus himself was the cause. The progress had been too slow and so he began to use force. Jerusalem was seized in the year 168. The sacred altar was torn down and an altar reared to Zeus, upon which swine's flesh was sacrificed, while soldiers and harlots filled the holy place. Then the persecution began. There was to be no observance of the Sabbath, no circumcision, no sacrifice to Jehovah, nor might any one have in his home a copy of the Law. Those who did these things or who refused to sacrifice to the pagan gods were to be put to death. Many fell away, but many were faithful. The hour of persecution became the hour of the greatest revival that Judaism had seen. Men and women went gladly to their death rather than prove false to their faith. Others were stirred by their examples.

The story of these martyrdoms deserves a place in history beside those of the early church and of the Christians of Armenia and China in our day.

The Maccabees.—At first there was no resistance and no leadership. A thousand were slain at one time because they would not fight when attacked on the Sabbath. Then came forth a group of remarkable leaders, the aged priest Mattathias and his five sons. One of these sons, Judas, proved himself a general of highest ability. He was known as Maccabeus, "the hammerer," and from him the family took its name, the Maccabees. With astonishing courage and skill they fought the Syrian armies, stirring their followers with the summons to trust in the God who had delivered their fathers. In three years the worship in the temple was reestablished. For something less than a century Israel regained political independence, after which she became subject to the new power from the West, the Roman empire. But she had saved the faith of the prophets and had won for all time the right of freedom of worship according to that faith. Persecutions in abundance the Jews have suffered since then, but that freedom they have never lost.

The Book of Daniel

Jewish Apocalypses.—The spirit and the hope that stirred the Jews at this time are well shown to us by the book of Daniel. This book is an apocalypse, a form of writing which was very common in the last two centuries before Christ and the next century following. The Jewish apocalypses all have the same general method of giving their message through visions and using all manner of pictures and symbols. They were written in times of oppression and distress. Their authors were men of piety and faith. Their purpose was to encourage the people by showing them that, despite oppression, God was still watching over his own, that the nations were all in God's hands, whose kingdom at its fixed time would surely be established. Feeling that they were writing in the spirit

of the great men of the past, these men set forth their messages under such names as those of Enoch, Moses, Solomon, and Daniel.

The Message of Daniel.—The book of Daniel, probably written within a few years after the desecration of the temple and before the worship was reestablished, was of great influence in these years; its faith and courage and loyalty to Jehovah represent the spirit that stirred the Jews to such heroic deeds. The first six chapters of Daniel give us the familiar stories which have charmed us and stirred us from childhood on. The second half is made up of the visions. In a great picture the author sets forth in chapter seven under the form of four beasts the four great kingdoms of Babylonia, Persia, Media, and Greece. Then at last God comes in judgment, "the ancient of days," bringing in the last kingdom, which is given to "one like unto a son of man." "Son of man" was a phrase used later as a name for the Messiah; here it seems to refer to Israel, as indicated by verse 27: "And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." The little horn of chapter eight refers to Antiochus, and chapter 11. 21-45 describes the reign and the death of this king.

The Canon

More important than the political events, though closely connected with them, were the changes that took place in the religious life and institutions of the Jews. Only one of these can be taken up in this lesson, and that is the forming of the canon. By the canon we mean the list of writings declared to be sacred, for the Jews the Old Testament, for us the Old Testament and the New.

The Three Books.—The Jews had three such collections which formed their canon, and these were not all placed upon the same plane. First came the Law, comprising the first five books of the Bible. It was under Nehemiah

and Ezra that this was solemnly adopted by the people. This Book of the Law was the most sacred to the Jews, and compared by them to the Holy of holies. Next came the Prophets, which they compared to the holy place. This collection included all the prophets as we know them excepting Daniel, together with the earlier historical books, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Though these books had long been read and honored, it was probably not until B. C. 200 that they were gathered into a definite and authoritative collection. The last collection, containing all the other books, is called the "Writings." This was compared with the temple court. These writings were first gathered together during the Maccabean period (about 150). In trying to destroy the books of the Law, Antiochus simply made the Jews feel the value of their sacred writings the more, and so they began collecting these other writings which were not already gathered together in the Law or the Prophets. This work was not finally completed until long after, for even after the time of our Lord the Jewish rabbis disputed whether writings like Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon should be included. These three collections formed the Bible of Jesus, as they form part of our Bible to-day, and for their preservation many a Jew laid down his life in the dark days of Antiochus.

Directions for Study

Read carefully the selections from Maccabees given below and Daniel 7. If time permits, look through the book of Daniel, and note the lessons that it would bring to the Jews at such a time. The Apocrypha can be bought in the American Standard Revision, either separately or bound in one volume with the Bible. 2 Maccabees 5, 6, and 7 give a graphic picture of persecutions and heroism. The more sober and connected history is given in 1 Maccabees. Read as much as you can of these. It will help us to understand the people with whom Jesus lived and worked, if we realize that these writings were known to all and read by all.

Good maps are of the greatest value in study.[1] Each class

[1]Maps. The best maps available are a revised and condensed edition of the Historical Maps for Bible Students (wall maps), edited by Professor Charles Kent, Ph.D., of Yale University, and Albert Alonzo

should have a set of maps of its own. Refer to these or to the maps which may be in your own Bible. Look at a map of the ancient world. Notice how small Palestine is, yet how important its location. Can you understand why these great kingdoms fought for it? Note where the armies would have to march from Assyria to Egypt, or from Macedonia to Egypt.

Make a list of Jewish names, institutions, and ideas which appear in the New Testament and are lacking in the Old.

What New Testament book was written, like Daniel, to give encouragement in a period of persecution by picturing the future triumph of the Kingdom?

Name some other wars that have been waged for liberty of thought and faith and life. How does the Maccabean struggle compare with them in importance for later ages?

The Story of the Maccabees

In those days came there forth out of Israel transgressors of the law, and persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles that are round about us; for since we were parted from them many evils have befallen us. . . . And they built a place of exercise in Jerusalem according to the laws of the Gentiles; and they made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the Gentiles, and sold themselves to do evil. . . . And king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, and that each should forsake his own laws. And all the nations agreed according to the word of the king; and many of Israel consented to his worship, and sacrificed to the idols, and profaned the sabbath. . . . And on the fifteenth day of Chislev, in the hundred and forty and fifth year, they builded an abomination of desolation upon the altar, and in the cities of Judah on every side they builded idol altars. And at the doors of the houses and in the streets they burned incense. And they rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, and set them on fire. And wheresoever was found with any a book of the covenant, and if any consented to the law, the king's sentence delivered him to death. . . . And on the five and twentieth day of the month they sacrificed upon the idol

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Madsen, Ph.D. Seven maps. Price, complete, $5, prepaid. The Methodist Book Concern. 1. The Sinaitic Peninsula with Palestine to the north, and a portion of the Nile and its delta to the southwest. 2. Palestine during the period when the Israelites were finding permanent homes in eastern and western Palestine. 3. Palestine during the time of the united Hebrew kingdom. 4. Palestine after the exile and during the days of the restored Jewish community and of the later Maccabean kingdom. 5. Palestine in the time of Christ. 6. Roman empire during the first Christian century and all the important provinces that figure in early church history. 7. The lands of the civilized world, including the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, the Syrian coast, and a portion of the Nile valley.

altar, which was upon the altar of God. And the women that had circumcised their children they put to death according to the commandment. And they hanged their babies about their necks, and destroyed their houses, and them that had circumcised them (1 Maccabees 1. 11, 14, 15, 41-43, 54-57, 59-61).

In those days rose up Mattathias the son of John, the son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, from Jerusalem, and he dwelt at Modin. And he had five sons, John, who was surnamed Gaddis; Simon, who was called Thassi; Judas, who was called Maccabæus; Eleazar, who was called Avaran; Jonathan, who was called Apphus. . . . Then were gathered together unto them a company of Hasidæans, mighty men of Israel, every one that offered himself willingly for the law. And all they that fled from the evils were added to them, and became a stay unto them. And they mustered a host, and smote sinners in their anger, and lawless men in their wrath: and the rest fled to the Gentiles for safety. And Mattathias and his friends went round about, and pulled down the altars; and they circumcised by force the children that were uncircumcised, as many as they found in the coasts of Israel (1 Maccabees 2. 1-5, 42-46).

Eleazar, one of the principal scribes, a man already well stricken in years, and of a noble countenance, was compelled to open his mouth to eat swine's flesh. But he, welcoming death with renown rather than life with pollution, advanced of his own accord to the instrument of torture. . . . But they that had the charge of that forbidden sacrificial feast took the man aside, for the acquaintance which of old times they had with him, and privately besought him to bring flesh of his own providing, such as was befitting for him to use, and to make as if he did eat of the flesh from the sacrifice, as had been commanded by the king. . . . It becometh not our years to dissemble, said he, that through this many of the young should suppose that Eleazar, the man of fourscore years and ten, had gone over unto an alien religion; and so they, by reason of my dissimulation, and for the sake of this brief and momentary life, should be led astray because of me, and thus I get to myself a pollution and a stain of mine old age. . . . By manfully parting with my life now, I will show myself worthy of mine old age, and leave behind a noble ensample to the young to die willingly and nobly a glorious death for the reverend and holy laws (2 Maccabees 6. 18, 19, 21, 24, 25, 27, 28).

CHAPTER II

THE LAW AND THE HOPE

WHAT religion did the Jews have in Jesus' day? We know that their Bible was the Old Testament, but that does not answer our question. A man's religion usually consists of three elements: what he believes, what he does, and what he hopes for. What Israel believed will be spoken of in the next chapter; here we consider the other two parts of her religion. Some one has said that Israel's religion was not like a circle with its center, but like an ellipse with its two foci. These two foci, around which the everyday life of the pious Jew moved, were the Law and the hope, and this everyday religion of the Jew we must now study in order that we may better understand Jesus' work and teaching.

How Israel Became a People of the Law

The Change.—The religion of the Jews in Jesus' day was a religion of the Law. The great concern was not the temple and its sacrifices, not the reading of words like those of the prophets, nor the service of men in the name of God; it was the keeping of a set of numberless rules which covered every part and every hour of a man's life. How different this situation from any Old Testament period a little consideration will show. In the Old Testament we see the priest or prophet as leader; here it is the scribe, the teacher of the Law. There the temple or shrine was the religious center; here it is the synagogue. How did this come about?

How the Change Came.—First of all, we must note that it was the result of the work of earnest and devout men whose principal aim was to preserve the religion of Israel from the defilement of her pagan neighbors, as well as to

regulate more carefully the life of the people. So, for example, the keeping of the Sabbath was especially emphasized as a mark of separation from her neighbors when Israel was exposed to danger in the period of the exile and the return (Isa. 58. 13, 14; Neh. 13. 15-22). Circumcision was a mark especially emphasized, as were also the laws of ceremonial purity with particular reference to food (see Dan. 1). But the fight under the Maccabees put the seal upon this work. Here the Jewish religion faced perhaps the greatest peril that ever threatened it. Grecian thought and customs were the vogue. All other peoples were surrendering to this Hellenistic influence, and the very leaders of the Jews, the strong priestly party, were favorable to it. The stricter Jews seemed helpless at first; then they awoke. The Maccabees were their political leaders, but they had spiritual leaders, too. These were the students and teachers of the law whom we know in the New Testament as the scribes. They felt that the Law alone could save Israel from Grecian luxury, immorality, and superstition. They won their fight and Israel was committed to the strict observance of the Law.

Training in the Law.—There had been reforms and revivals in Israel before this time, but the people had backslidden; the scribes now set to work to make sure their victory. Israel must be made through and through a people of the Law. We are awakening to-day to the need of religious education, but these scribes saw that need over two thousand years ago. They did not rely upon the enthusiasm of this revival; they set two goals for themselves. The first goal was to train all Israel in the Law. They established the first national system of education for all the people. The center of the people's religious life now became the synagogue. In Jesus' day the synagogue was found in every village of Palestine and wherever else the Jews settled. While it had a religious service, it was more of a school than a church; the reading and teaching of the Law was central. With the synagogue there was usually the school where the children were taught; and whether

the children read or listened or wrote, the one subject was the Law. This fact helps us to understand the saying of Josephus, that a Jew could more easily answer a question as to the Law than give his own name.

The Traditions of the Elders.—The second goal set by the scribes was to extend the Law so that it would cover the whole life of the people. The Law said, for example, that men were not to work on the Sabbath; but this must be applied to all possible circumstances. As a result we have that enormous mass of rules which the New Testament calls "the traditions of the elders." No one could know them who had not given his life to their study, and this the scribes did. They were not written down but were committed to memory. It was one of the chief duties of the scribes to gather pupils, whom they taught these traditions. These disciples of the rabbis were not to think for themselves; they were not even to study the Scriptures for themselves. They were simply to learn and repeat. The model pupil, so the saying ran, was like a well-cemented cistern, losing no drop of what it received, and letting nothing else leak in.

The Religion of the Law

In Daily Life.—Such a development led necessarily to the trivial and external. Men tithed mint and anise and cummin, garden herbs that had no value, and forgot "justice and mercy and faith." There were thirty-nine kinds of work which were forbidden on the Sabbath, with many divisions under each. They discussed the question whether a man might eat an egg laid upon the Sabbath. It was a serious matter for the tailor to forget to remove the needle that he had stuck in his robe, for then he would be likely to carry it on the Sabbath, and to carry your tools on the Sabbath was breaking the law. So Jesus' disciples were condemned for rubbing out the grain from the ears of wheat which they plucked, since this was threshing on the Sabbath. One of the prohibited labors was writing. To write one letter was permitted; to write two was a sin.

But to scratch one letter on the wall and another on the earth was not a sin, provided they could not be read together. And this mass of rules and traditions became the real authority for the people, taking the place of the Scriptures themselves, just as the devout Roman Catholic today goes for final authority, not to the Bible, but to the teaching of the church about the Bible.

Its Consequences.—Some results of such a religion are apparent. The little and the great were all put upon the same plane; they were all so many things to be done. It tended to make religion formal, turning men away from the inner spirit to outward rules and deeds. It gave a wrong conception of God and of man's relation to him. God was not the Father near at hand, with whom men might walk in humble love and trust. He was the Ruler and the Judge. He gave to men not himself, but his commandments. The business of men was to keep these rules and at the end of this keeping there was to be the reward. No wonder that the message of Jesus was the light of another day to many discouraged souls.

Its Effect upon Men.—More important, however, is the question as to the effect that it produced upon the lives of men. The final test of a religion is the way it works. When we compare Jewish life of this time with that of other peoples, we are struck with its superiority. These men were deeply in earnest. Men like Paul were sparing no effort to keep the Law. Contrasted with life at Antioch or Corinth, we see the moral earnestness, the absence of the sensual and profligate, in the Jews of Palestine. In the light of the message that Jesus brought, however, we note the deep defects of the religion of the Law. The first of these was that of pride and self-sufficiency. "God, I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men," prayed the Pharisee (Luke 18. 11). It was this spirit that shut the hearts of the Pharisees to Jesus' message. The second defect is the spirit of uncertainty and fear that often lay beneath this very self-assurance. The man who must trust in what he himself does will always be haunted by the dread that in the end he has not done enough. In sharp-

est contrast were the joy and confidence of the early Christians to whom God was the Father of mercy and not the stern Judge. In the third place, as we see from the seventh chapter of Romans, the law brought commandments, but gave no power to keep them. It left large numbers of people discouraged and hopeless. These were the "sinners," of whom we read in the Gospels. They were not necessarily immoral people, but they had given up the task of keeping this whole system of rules. These were the weary and heavy-laden, scorned by the Pharisees who condemned Jesus so bitterly for associating with them.

Pharisees and Sadducees.—The Pharisees were the party of the strict observers of the Law. We find the first trace of them in the Chasidim, or "pious," of the Maccabean period. Though their opponents, the Sadducees, held the priestly places and the control of the temple, yet the Pharisees, with the scribes who belonged to them, were the real leaders. There were not many of them; Josephus says about six thousand. The Sadducees also take us back to the time of Antiochus. They were the successors of the liberal party that favored the Greeks at that time. In numbers they were still smaller than the Pharisees, but the hereditary priesthood largely belonged to them, with its prestige and political power and immense resources from temple tax and offerings. They rejected the traditions of the Pharisees and held simply to the laws of Moses. They rejected the Pharisaic teachings as to the resurrection, which was the "new theology" of the day, not being contained in the older books of the Old Testament. The real difference, however, was simply that between religion and worldliness. Though faulty, the Pharisees were the party of zeal and religious earnestness; the Sadducees were simply the little circle of the rich and worldly-minded. After the destruction of the temple they disappeared entirely from view.

The Hope

The Messianic Hope.—No religion can exist simply as

a commandment; it must bring its promise also. The Law determined the activity of the pious Jew, but the spring of his religion lay in its hope. We usually call this the Messianic hope. It would be more correct to call it the Kingdom hope. The hope itself was held in many forms. The idea of the Messiah was not always prominent; sometimes it was even lacking. But one idea was always present: there is evil in the world now, but some time there will be only the rule of God; the kingdom of God is coming. There are two general forms which this hope takes. The first is that of a kingdom upon this earth, a political kingdom. Israel was the people of Jehovah, and Jehovah was the ruler of the earth; yet Israel was subject to the nations. That fact formed a hard problem for the faith of Israel, and she answered: "This is for the present; soon Jehovah will overthrow his enemies and show himself as the ruler of the nations." In all this it was a kingdom on earth for which men looked, and this triumph of Jehovah always meant to them the rule of Israel. In later years there was joined to this the idea of the rebuilding of the temple and the gathering of the scattered members of Israel from all lands.

Its Dangers.—It was this hope that kept alive the faith of Israel in the long years of oppression. But such a hope was full of danger also. In the minds of the people it tended to be political and external, rather than moral and spiritual; they thought of Israel's triumph rather than the rule of righteousness. It was narrow and national; when they thought of other peoples, it was as those over whom Israel should be victor and who should bring tribute to Jerusalem. The prophets denounced this selfish hope. Amos declared that the day of Jehovah should be darkness, and not light (Amos 5. 18). The book of Jonah is a wonderful protest against this narrow spirit. Yet this spirit ruled in Jesus' day; his teaching was one long effort to substitute another ideal. The fierce advocates of this conception were the Zealots from his own land of Galilee. These at length carried away with them the people that had rejected Jesus' message, raising the banner

of revolt against Rome, and bringing in the awful days of famine and burning and slaughter in which Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 70.

The Apocalyptic Hope.—In its second form we know this kingdom hope as the apocalyptic hope. In the last few centuries before Christ certain interesting changes took place. These appear in a class of writings which we call apocalypses, of which the book of Daniel is the first. As the years passed there seemed to be less and less chance for establishing an earthly kingdom over against Israel's mighty foes; and so men looked forward to another age with a new heaven and a new earth. The problem of the individual helped to advance the same ideas. The idea of the resurrection is found at most in two or three places in the late books of the Old Testament. The people had been content with the idea of a future for the nation. Now men began to ask about the individual. What should become of him? The ideas of immortality and resurrection began to come in, and the thought of individual judgment and reward. And so they thought of a new age that was to bring a general resurrection from the dead, the judgment upon every individual, and the reward of heaven and hell.

The Intermediate Kingdom.—These ideas existed side by side and often in great confusion: the Messianic hope of an earthly kingdom and the apocalyptic hope of a new age with its heaven and hell. In the effort to bring in some order there came the idea of an intermediate kingdom which has influenced many people since that day. Men simply joined the two forms of hope together. First there was to come an earthly reign of the Messiah, such as the Jews had always expected. In this reign the saints were to be raised and the oppressors overthrown, but the Kingdom still belonged to this age and the spiritual forces of evil were not yet destroyed. After this was to come the general resurrection and the final judgment, and the new earth with heaven and hell. How long this intermediate kingdom was to last was variously determined by the rabbis: forty, four hundred, one thousand, and two thou-

sand years were suggested. The period of a thousand years was finally accepted, and so this teaching is known as millennialism or chiliasm from the Latin and Greek words for one thousand.

Directions for Study

Before reading this chapter recall the story of Chapter I. Remember that Israel's great passion was her religion, as philosophy and art and letters had been that of Greece, and political rule that of Rome. Review the story of the Maccabees and try to fix the main points in mind. Try to realize how the Jews of Jesus' day read this story and how it deepened their zeal.

Read all of Psalm 119 and note the delight in the law that is here reflected. This psalm was probably written at a late period, but in any case it reflects the common attitude of the Jewish people at its best, their pride in the law and their devotion to it.

Read Matthew 15. 1-20 and note Jesus' criticism of the religion of legalism as exemplified by the scribes and Pharisees. He declares that by their traditions and rules they defeat the law of God. He points out the externalism of this religion, which is busy with outward things and misses the real evils.

In Luke 1 and 2 read the songs of Mary and Zacharias. What is the hope that is here expressed for Israel? Note that these represent the simple piety of the purest souls among the Jews, belonging neither to Pharisees, Sadducees, nor Zealots.

CHAPTER III

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE KINGDOM IN JESUS' DAY

It was one of the grave faults of Judaism that it could see nothing outside of itself. To the Jews it seemed that God had spoken only to Israel, and that his plans were for Israel alone. Long ago the prophet had written of a coming better day: "In that day shall Israel be a third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (Isa. 19. 24, 25). Paul knew that besides the Jewish law there was a law that God had written in the hearts even of Gentiles; that he was the God who had not left himself without a witness, the one in whom all men lived and moved and had their being. To-day we see clearly that God not only spoke through the prophets and used the people of Israel, but that he was carrying out his plans of the Kingdom for other peoples and through them.

The Preparation.—As we come, then, to the supreme event in God's plan, the coming of Christ, we need to ask, How was the world prepared for this new epoch? The early Christians declared that Jesus came when the time was fulfilled (Mark 1. 15; Gal. 4. 4). In what sense was this true? What foundations had been laid? What forces of the Kingdom were there present, not simply with the Jews, but with other peoples? A brief answer to these questions can best be given under the names of the three great civilizations of the world in that day, the Roman, the Grecian, and the Jewish. There was not one world in that day, but three: the political world in which Rome

was supreme, the world of culture and philosophy in which Greece ruled, the world of faith in which the Jews stood first. Each of these worlds had its rich gift for this new day of the Kingdom.

Rome

Rome and Jesus.—It was a Roman world in which Jesus was born. The Jews, like all other nations around the Mediterranean, were under her rule. Their high priest and their senate, or Sanhedrin, had large powers of local government, but the Roman procurator was supreme; Rome gathered the taxes, Roman soldiers held the land. From the hills that overlooked his boyhood home Jesus must often have seen the marching legions. It was a Roman order concerning a census that brought it about that he should be born at Bethlehem, it was a Roman ruler that sentenced him to death, and Roman soldiers nailed him to the cross.

Rome and World-Unity.—Rome laid upon the peoples an iron hand. She did not interfere with local customs, but she demanded full measure in taxes. While treasures flowed to Rome, the poor in these lands suffered deeply. The Gospel pages show us plenty of wretched folks: the sick and maimed and blind, the slaves, the poor waiting for work in the market place, the beggars by the wayside or lying at the door of the rich. Yet Rome brought her gifts and the first of them was world-unity. She finished the work that Alexander had begun, she made one world of all the nations of the west. She broke down century-old barriers, she opened wide doors so that the life and thought of all the peoples might mingle around that great inland sea. The Jewish vision of the Kingdom was national and limited; Rome helped to give a world-vision to the leaders of the new faith. It is significant that the outstanding leader who stood for this world-view of the new kingdom was himself a free-born Roman citizen and proud of the distinction. Paul's Roman citizenship helped him to his imperial view of Christianity.

Rome and World-Peace.—The second gift of Rome was

that of world-peace. She had brushed aside the hostile boundaries that separated one nation from another. Her roads ran everywhere. Built for her legions, they served for the messengers of a new and higher kingdom. Under Pompey her galleys had cleared the Mediterranean of pirates, and this highway too was free for the busy vessels of all lands. She thus brought in a new day of traffic and travel, and the ways by sea and land were filled with soldiers and merchants, students and laborers, pilgrims and pleasure-seekers. And it was men like these, laymen whose business or search for work carried them from land to land, that did even more than the little group of apostles in spreading the new faith and life. We can hardly imagine the extension of Christianity throughout the empire in so brief a time without this gift of Rome.

Greece

The Highways of the Mind.—If Rome opened the roads on land and sea, Greece built the highways for the human mind; and one was as important as the other. Alexander had carried Greek language and culture everywhere. Rome conquered Greece and then went to school to her. Greek became the universal language of the empire. Jesus probably knew it, although he seems to have preferred his native Aramaic. How much all this meant for early Christianity we can hardly estimate. The modern missionary must struggle long with a strange tongue before he can begin his work. Even then he is limited to one land, and in India or Africa to one province. Paul moved through Syria, Cilicia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, Italy, and with his Grecian speech men understood him everywhere. He sat down to write to Christians in rude Galatia, or Grecian Corinth, or distant Rome. In every case he used the same language and knew that these men, whose native tongue was Galatian or Greek, Latin or Aramaic, would understand his words. Our New Testament is a Greek book. Outside of Palestine, the Old Testament which the Jews used in their synagogue worship was

a Greek translation. Many years before a great prophet had written: "Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa. 40. 3). The peaceful roads of Rome and the common speech of Greece were the great fulfillment of this word.

Influence of Grecian Thought.—But a language is never an empty vessel; it carries its freight of ideas wherever it goes. With the Grecian speech went Grecian thought. There had been many noble spirits among the Greek thinkers. They had stood for the spiritual against the material, for the soul of man and its worth. They had fought against the superstitions of their own land; they had argued or laughed out of court the old polytheism. Greece helped prepare the world for the doctrine of the one God as for that of immortality. When Paul speaks of conscience, it is a Greek word that he uses, not Hebrew. He quotes to the men at Athens one of their own poets, and finds in other thoughts a common standing-ground with them (Acts 17. 22-31). We can understand how early Christian writers like Clement of Alexandria declared that these philosophers brought the Grecians to Christ as the Law did the Jews. "There is but one way of truth," Clement adds, "but into it there empty many streams from many sides, as into a flowing river."

The Jews

The Gift of Israel.—As we study the Jewish religion at the time of Christ, we are apt to notice its defects first of all. We have already studied its two main aspects, the law and the hope. As a religion of law, it was hard, calculating, formal. Instead of a simple trustful fellowship with God, we find men weighing how much they must do, viewing religion as a task, asking as to their reward. As a religion of hope it was national and narrow, seeing only Israel. It thought more of power and splendor than it did of righteousness, more of the judgment on its enemies than of the victory over sin. And yet it was as a child of this people that Jesus appeared; here he found the

men that carried on his work; and here alone could that work have been begun. What, then, did the Jews contribute to the coming Kingdom? God had chosen this people for a special service of preparation; what was the fruitage of all these centuries of training? The answer may be summed up under three words: the Faith, the People, and the Writings.

I. The Faith: A Living God.—The greatest treasure of any man or nation is a living faith, and such a faith Israel possessed. For this faith her sons had been ready to offer up even life itself. How lofty that faith was we see only as we compare it with the highest in the nations round about. It was first of all a faith in a *living God.* Thoughtful men throughout the Grecian world had long since gotten the idea of one God, and the Stoics had taught a providence in nature. But this was in the main simply a theory of philosophers, gathered from the ordered nature round about them. But the Jehovah of Israel was the living God who had revealed himself in their history by his great deeds. It was he who had created the heavens and the earth (read especially Isa. 40), and had led them forth from Egypt "with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm." Again and again this note is sounded in the songs of Mary and Zacharias: "He that is mighty hath done to me great things. He hath showed strength with his arm."

A Righteous God.—This living God was a *righteous God.* That was the great message of Amos and Micah and Isaiah: Jehovah is righteous, and he demands righteousness in his worshipers, not incense and burnt-offerings. Whatever the philosophers may have taught, the religion of that day outside of Judaism had little to do with morality. Often, indeed, temple and worship were the center of immorality, as Paul found it at Corinth. The Jewish idea of righteousness may have become formal and narrow, but the demand itself was plain to them. Zacharias speaks the conviction of all Israel: "That we should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days."

A Great Hope.—With this faith there went *Israel's hope,* which fills with joy these songs in the first chapter of Luke.

"Blessed *be* the Lord, the God of Israel;
For he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people,
And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us
In the house of his servant David."

And with this national hope, descended from the earlier days, there had come in later times the doctrine of the resurrection and immortality, to speak their comfort to the individual.

II. The People: Their Devotion.—Besides the faith, there were the people in whom the faith lived. The Jews were a scattered nation even then, living in every part of the Roman world, and everywhere they were a preparation for Christianity. Everywhere they spread the principles of this great faith as a leaven. Then, as now, they were despised by many, but there were those not Jews who came to hear and some who remained to worship. Paul found the synagogue a good place to begin his work and many of his first and best converts were secured there.

If we turn from the Dispersion to the Jews of Palestine, we find here too the preparation of the gospel in the people. Our common notion here has often been wrong, because we have fixed our eyes upon a few scribes and Pharisees, and have seen only narrowness and pride and formalism. We must remember the twelve and the other faithful disciples of Jesus who were Jews, as well as the many others who heard him gladly. It was these Jews that made the first church, that wrote our New Testament in most part, and that carried the gospel throughout the world.

We should be grateful for these first pages of Luke because of the picture that they give us of a circle that we might not otherwise know. The New Testament shows us the Pharisees, but they were only a few thousands; it shows us the Sadducees, but of these there were still less. But it shows us this other circle too, the simple, devout souls like Zacharias and Elisabeth, Joseph and Mary, the shep-

herds, and Simeon and Anna. You cannot tell the real life of a nation by what you read of its "prominent people," or by the names and tales that figure in newspaper headlines. In these quiet souls was the real heart of Israel; here its deepest faith and devotion lived on; they have been called "the quiet in the land." As we study these songs of Zacharias and Mary, we note how these folks fed not so much upon the traditions of the Law as upon the words of psalmist and prophet. Later we find Jesus drawing inspiration from these same sources. These folks did not teach the people, as did the scribes; nor govern the nation, as did the priests. But they had a higher glory and wrought a greater service: they furnished the homes in which were born and nurtured John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth.

III. The Writings: A Great Literature.—The third gift of the Jewish people was those sacred writings which form the Old Testament of our Christian Bible to-day. For many years this Old Testament was the only Bible of the early church. In its writings Jesus and his disciples were nurtured. It was no new God that Jesus proclaimed, but the Jehovah who appeared in these pages, "the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob." From its pages he took his answer to the tempter, and one of its psalms was on his lips in the last agony of the cross (Psa. 22). Years before this it had been translated into the Greek, a translation that was called the Septuagint, from a tradition about seventy scholars who were supposed to have made it. This Greek translation was carried by Jews throughout the world, and the early Christian preachers took it with them where they went. Its language gave these Christians the words in which their greater message was spoken. Who can measure what this Old Testament, the Bible of Jesus, has meant to men since then? We read its histories and see again the living God moving in the tide of human affairs. We read its psalms and they voice our own prayers and confessions, our faith and our worship, our joys and our tears. We turn to its prophets and they speak like men of our own day, scourging our

formalism in religion and our social oppression and wrong. And to this day what better word can we find to put on the walls of Christian temples than Micah's great message as to the meaning of religion: "And what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Directions for Study

Recall the main points of the first two lessons: Israel's fight for religious freedom, her deep zeal for the Law, and the hope which stirred her.

Read Luke 1. 1 to 2. 39. From these pages try to picture the inner religious life of these people and the atmosphere in which Jesus and John grew up. Here, as in all Bible study, the marginal references in the American Revised Version are of great value. The student should form the habit of looking up these references on special points. By the aid of these marginal references note the many Old Testament phrases used in these songs.

Read Acts 17. 22-31. Bring before your mind what was said of the Roman and Grecian world. Think of this as the world to which Paul went forth. Think of it also as the world in which Jesus was born.

At the close of your study try to sum up in turn the contributions made by Rome, Greece, and Israel, and to fix these in your mind.

Outside of the Christian Church, what do you consider the greatest forces in the world of to-day which are making for the kingdom of God?

CHAPTER IV

JOHN THE PROPHET

The Fullness of Time: the Law.—JESUS came in the fullness of time. That fullness lay not simply in what had been wrought by Greece and Rome or in what Israel contributed from her past: it lay in the very condition of the Jewish people at this time. We have seen that the two focal points in the Jewish life were the Law and the hope. The fullness of time was come so far as the religion of the Law was concerned. The Pharisees had worked out that system to its full consequences and had made every part of the people's life subject to it. But the Law that ruled men could not give men life. It could bring commandment, but not peace or power. Paul is our great illustration here. If this man failed, with his masterful will and his absolute devotion, how could the Law save common folks? The time had come for a higher way.

The Fullness of Time: in History.—The same thing is true when we think of the people's hope. The hearts of the people were filled with expectation. True, the yoke of Rome lay heavy, but the tide of national spirit ran full. The glories of the Maccabean day were not far in the past, and the people remembered them though the priests had made their compact with Rome and frowned on Messianic dreams, while the minds of the Pharisees were filled with the matters of law. The hearts of men were stirred with great hopes. We see them reflected in the pages of the New Testament, in the frequent reference to kingdom and Messiah, in the party of the Zealots, in the references to uprisings and false Messiahs (Luke 6. 15; 13. 1; Acts 5. 36, 37; 21. 38). A generation later and the conditions were all changed. The year A. D. 70 is the great dividing line in the history of Judaism. In that

fateful year city and temple were destroyed and the old worship passed away; the Jewish religion became the religion of the Law alone, and the sway of the scribe was complete. We cannot think of Jesus' work as being done after that time.

John the Man

The Voice of His Age.—John the Baptist was the highest expression of the hopes and longings of his age. We have not done justice to this great figure. We have thought of him as a herald, a voice, and have not seen how much more than this he was. It was his lot to bring together the old and the new. He voiced what was noblest in the past while he made ready for that which was to come. And yet he was a man of his own age and his own people, compelling these to listen because what was deepest in their conscience and faith spoke to them through him.

His Appearing.—There are few figures more striking than that of John. He is like that Elijah with whom Jesus compared him. He comes of a sudden from the obscurity of the wilderness. We see him for a little while, a figure of commanding power swaying the multitudes; then almost as suddenly he disappears again from view. Only a few words are needed to tell the story of his life. He was a hermit, dwelling in the wilderness near the Jordan. He was a man before he was a preacher, preparing himself in meditation and repentance for the coming of the Messiah of whose nearness he felt sure. It may be that it was his fame as a hermit that reached the people first, and that their coming to him was his opportunity and his call to bring to the nation that which filled his own heart. In any case, when we first see him the throngs from all Judæa are coming to him, hearing his stern and searching word and receiving his baptism in the Jordan. Soon they were coming from Galilee as well, just as one day there came the young Man from Nazareth and the young men from Capernaum. Most of the crowd came and went, a motley company, including even haughty Pharisees and lordly Sadducees from Jerusalem. Some

joined themselves to his person as disciples, of whom were Andrew and perhaps John and Peter and Nathanael.

His End.—At length Herod Antipas, to whom Galilee and Peræa belonged, laid hold of John and imprisoned him. Herod's wife, Herodias, had first married Herod Philip, who, like Antipas, was her uncle. Probably because of ambition, she left him to marry his brother Antipas. It was this shameless marriage that John had denounced, and it was the anger of Herodias that caused his death in the gloomy fortress of Machærus, where Josephus tells us that John was imprisoned. Apart from this tragedy, only one other event comes to us from these days in prison, the sending of two disciples to Jesus to inquire whether he were the Messiah. From this distance we cannot be sure of the meaning of this act: whether it sprang from a doubt caused by John's own fate, or was done for the sake of his disciples.

The Message of John

Believe and Repent.—What was the message of John that so stirred the people from one end of the land to the other? It was first of all John's declaration that the Kingdom was at hand. That was enough to draw the multitudes. But that was not the whole of John's message, nor what was new in it. The new note was the word "repent." That word had been sounded by the prophets of old, but had not often been heard in John's day. The Jews were looking for deliverance, not because of their righteousness or repentance, but because they were Abraham's children. That is not enough to build upon, John declares; God can raise up out of these stones children of Abraham. It is righteousness that he wants. The judgment is to be not upon the nations, but upon unrighteous men everywhere. The Messiah is coming, but he will sift Israel as wheat is sifted from the chaff. The chaff will be destroyed, the trees without fruit will be cut down. And he is at hand; repent. The ax is already at the root of the tree, the fan is already in his hand.

The Prophet.—Thus John preached, stirring first men's hopes, then laying hold of their conscience. And men heard him for the one reason as for the other, just as of old their fathers listened to the fearless prophets. That, indeed, was another reason why they came. Here was once more a prophet. Such Jesus called him, such the people held him to be. It had been one of their sorrows that for so many generations there had been no such messenger from God. Now God was speaking to his people again. Nothing shows so clearly the impression that John made as this, that the people placed him by the side of those great men who had spoken for God in the past, the men who were the glory of their nation's history.

The Baptism of John.—In one respect John differed from the prophets; he asked the people to undergo a ceremony of baptism. But here too it was the prophet at work, and not the priest. It was not that the rite had any magic meaning. It was a form familiar to the people, used for ceremonial cleansing (see Lev. 15 and elsewhere), and also when a proselyte was admitted. The people knew it, then, as a symbol of purity on the one hand, and a ceremony of enrollment on the other. With John it seems to have had both meanings, only deepened and enriched in accordance with his message. It was a baptism of repentance and a sign of cleansing from sin. And so he was wont to tell those who came for baptism definitely what evil they must cast from their lives; the soldiers must cease oppressing, the taxgatherers must not take more than was due. But it was a sign of enrollment too; these men were pledging themselves to repentance and a new life in preparation for the coming Messiah. It was the covenant of a new Israel that was to be prepared to meet its King.

The Meaning of John's Work

The Forerunner.—What was the meaning of John's work? He was first of all a prophet, as Jesus called him. We see to-day that the glory and strength of Israel lay not in priest and temple; not in the laws which were begin-

ning and end for the Pharisees. It was in her prophets: men who saw God and feared no man, men who heard God and could but speak, men who denounced sin in places high and low, too often reaping a reward of death, like John; and yet men of courage because they believed that Jehovah had a great purpose to work out in the end. All of this at its best was in John. And he was more than a prophet: he was the forerunner whose privilege it was to usher in the new day of greater things.

His Limitations.—The limitations of John's work are as clear as its strength, and John recognized this himself. His work was negative; he could but call men to leave evil; another was to come who was to establish the good. He baptized with water, the symbol; but, like the prophets of old, he knew that a greater work was needed. Jeremiah had written of the days of the new covenant, when men were to have not a law above them, but a new spirit within them, the law in their hearts (Jer. 31. 31-34). And Joel had spoken of the Spirit that was to be poured out in that day (Joel 2. 28). So John declared that the Messiah was to baptize in the Holy Spirit and in fire. Yet even here John shares the limitations of the old; the Messiah is first of all for him the judge, fan in hand, ax at the root, cleansing with fire, but destroying as well. That was why Jesus declared the least in the kingdom of God as greater than he, not in character, but in that new vision of the God of grace and of the life of sonship which could say, "Abba, Father."

The Tribute of Jesus.—To the greatness of John's character Jesus gave recognition in one of the finest tributes ever paid to men. John was the man of strength, Jesus said, not a swaying reed. He was the devoted man; there was no softness of raiment, no luxury of food with him. He was the prophet; there could be no higher calling. And he was a man, with none greater born of woman. It was generous praise, for we must remember that at this time Jesus was the prophet little known, while John's name and fame had swept the land. But the heart of the common people whom John had stirred went out to Jesus at

this word, to this new prophet who began with kingdom and repentance, as John began, and yet whose message was so different.

The Results of John's Work

With the Nation, the Disciples, and Jesus.—What was the fruit of John's work? Very little, it would seem at first glance. With the multitudes it was largely curiosity. "What went ye out to behold?" is Jesus' question and comment. And yet there are incidents which show how mightily John stirred the nation. The crowd that came was not one that stopped for a moment in the street. They had to go out to the wilderness where John was. They came there from far Galilee as well as from Judæa, and even the Sadducees and Pharisees found their way. Even from Herod John won a mingled respect and fear. He did not want to put John to death, and his superstition saw in Jesus the mighty spirit of John come to life again. Long afterward Paul found in Ephesus a little group of disciples who had remained faithful to John's teaching (Acts 19. 1-7). And still another of his disciples was the eloquent Apollos, who, like the twelve that Paul found, remained faithful for years to the Baptist before he heard the gospel of Jesus. But John's greatest work lay in another direction. It was his message that stirred the young man Jesus in his little village home and called him forth, and it was his work that prepared the way for the greater One. He shook the easy confidence of many who had rested upon the fact that they were Abraham's children, and put upon their lips a new question: What must we do?

Directions for Study

Review briefly the previous lessons, calling to mind especially what we have studied as to the expectations of the people as to the Kingdom on the one hand, and on the other the formalism and failure in their religious life.

Read Luke 3. 1-18. Note the estimate of the religious life of his people implied in what John says, and the courage and definiteness of his preaching. John looks forward to another;

compare Jesus, who knows that there is nothing higher than his own word.

Read Mark 6. 12-29. Compare Mark 6. 20 with Matthew 14. 5. Which probably gives the more accurate account?

Read Matthew 11. 7-14. With what characters in biblical history or elsewhere would you compare John the Baptist?

Give an estimate of his character, stating his strong qualities and his limitations.

CHAPTER V

JESUS' PREPARATION AND HIS CALL

NEVER was there a great movement which began more simply than Christianity. We have already noted that there were certain Galilæans who had come down to hear John and had joined the inner circle of his disciples. One day another Galilæan appeared: Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth. He too listened to John's preaching, and then joined those who asked for baptism. In that hour of baptism there came the voice from God telling him that he was the Messiah whose nearness John was declaring. There in the heart of that young man, hidden from the eyes of the crowding throngs, was the real beginning of Christianity.

THE PREPARATION OF JESUS

The Boy Jesus.—Of what preceded the baptism of Jesus and of how Jesus was prepared, the Gospels give us no account. And yet there are suggestions of real value that we may consider. The mystery of that life nothing can explain, but it will be of interest and profit for us to get what light we can from Gospel page and Jewish custom upon the home and boyhood life of Jesus. For the suggestive words of Luke tell us that Jesus lived the normal life of a boy, subject to his parents and increasing year by year "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

Never was there a people who cared for the training of their children as did the Jews, especially in Jesus' day. There is nothing more hopeful in the life of the church to-day than the increasing attention that we are giving to religious education, but even now we are not giving as much time and thought as did the Jews. "Our ground is

good, and we work it to the utmost," writes Josephus; "but our chief ambition is for the nurture of our children."

The Study of the Law.—There were three elements in the training of a Jewish boy. The first was the study of the Law. That study began at home with mother and father as soon as a boy could speak. The first words that he learned were probably the Shema (Deut. 6. 4-9; 11. 13-21; Num. 15. 37-41). These words every devout Jew recited morning and evening. For most of them, no doubt, it was but a matter of the "vain repetitions" which Jesus condemned, like the *Pater nosters* and other prayers of some folks to-day. The words had other meaning for him. It is interesting to recall that his answer to the questioning scribe began with the first words that he learned as a child: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." At the age of six he started to the synagogue school to which was added later the Sabbath service.

Training Through History.—The story of Abraham and Isaac, of Joseph and his dreams, of Moses and his wonder-working rod, of Egypt's discomfiture and the great deliverance, of the exploits of David, down to the tale of splendid heroism under Judas Maccabeus and his brothers: this was the record that filled every Jewish boy with pride and made him, no matter how far from the land of his fathers, still above all else a Jew. To Jesus it brought the sense of a living, working presence of God, and it was this God of his fathers that he proclaimed when he began to teach: the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob.

And this history was not taught by stories alone. The great festivals were an even more powerful mode of stirring religious patriotism. The three principal festivals were those of the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and that of Tabernacles. They set forth the great events of the past: deliverance from Egypt, the giving of the Law, and the life in the wilderness. At least once a year each pious Jew sought to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for one of

these feasts, especially the Passover. We can hardly realize how deep the impression must have been: the city bursting into view as the pilgrims reached the crest of the hill overlooking its wonderful buildings; the memories clustering about the place, from David onward; the crowding throngs from every quarter of the Roman world, filled with joy and patriotic exultation; and at last the wondrous temple itself, its courts, its sacred inner inclosure, and its solemn ritual. Luke's simple narrative suggests the profound impression made upon the boy Jesus at that first memorable visit.

The Influence of the Messianic Hope.—A third element entered into the training of the youth and must have been strongly present in Jesus' home. That was the hope which every pious Jew nurtured. It was present more strongly with the common people, indeed, than with the leaders. The priestly party had made its compromise with Rome, as it had before with the Greeks, to retain its position. The Pharisees had become quite willing to let political matters remain at one side, so long as they could devote themselves to the law and maintain their place as leaders there. But the ancient hopes still burned in the hearts of the common people. Pharisees and scribes pondered the traditions of the law; but the common people read the apocalypses, books like Daniel, which in vision and under all manner of pictures set forth the glorious triumph that was coming.

The Vision of Youth.—But it was not such writings that made the strongest appeal to Jesus. His later use of the Bible shows what his earlier study was. He loved the psalms, and it was a psalm that was on his lips when he died (Mark 15. 34). Next to them it was the prophets that appealed to him, and Deuteronomy, which itself is a prophetic book. These writings, with their devotion to God, their insistence upon righteousness, their denunciation of moral evil, appealed to what was in his own heart and helped to shape his own hope concerning the Kingdom. He too believed the new day was coming. Every plant which his Father had not planted was to be rooted up.

Sin and sorrow were to be done away and righteousness was to come. The Messiah was to bring in a new world, in which only the Father's will was to be done, and every other power was to be overthrown. How this vision must have stirred his heart and filled his waking hours.

The School of Common Life.—Meanwhile there was still another part of his preparation that went on, developing out of his simple daily life. He seems to have followed Joseph's calling of carpenter. In daily toil and common duties he learned to know men and life. He read the hearts of folks and saw the good and evil there, their weakness and temptations and needs. He learned the ways of common life, the work of the farmer, the builder, the merchant, the housewife. In beautiful Galilee, so much more fruitful than Judæa, he learned the wealth and beauty of nature which his sayings later reflected: the growing crops, the fair wild flowers, the flocking birds, the glowing dawn and sunset, and all the life which showed his Father's presence and his Father's care.

His Baptism and His Call

So Jesus lived on. Boyhood gave place to youth and manhood. If it be true that Joseph died early, then upon Jesus as the eldest son the cares of the home rested, with its goodly household of at least seven children (Matt. 13. 55, 56). The years of manhood too began to pass. They were not empty years for him either in inner growth or outer service, but his time was not yet come. Nor is there any suggestion that, when he pondered over the coming of the Kingdom and asked himself when it might be, he had yet realized that he himself was to be the chosen one to bring in that day. The words of the boy in the temple tell us only of a spirit filled with the thought of higher things and the devotion to his Father.

The Call of John.—There came a day at last when pilgrims from the south brought word of a wonderful preacher. He wrought no miracles, but those who heard him believed that at last a prophet had again arisen. They

told of his strange garb and holy life, of the throngs that moved out to hear him, and of his message. As Jesus heard the report of that message his heart was stirred within him. Here was one that voiced his own conviction. He did not call the people to rise against Rome, but to repent of their sins. Surely he was a prophet, and surely he was right, then, in his declaration that at length the Kingdom was at hand.

Jesus and John's Baptism.—Others had already gone down from Galilee when Jesus answered the call. Who John was he probably knew, but it is an open question whether these two were personally acquainted. Lost in the multitude, Jesus listened to John's preaching. Yes, this was indeed a herald of Jehovah. Then Jesus offered himself for baptism. We have seen that John's baptism had two meanings. It was a baptism of repentance, the sign that men were turning from their sins, thus to make ready for Messiah's coming, and it was a form of consecration, the enlistment of a new Israel to welcome her King. How could Jesus take this baptism upon him?

John himself, we are told, refused the baptism at first. It appears he did not recognize Jesus. But it was his wont apparently to question those whom he baptized, as we see from the directions he gave to the taxgatherers and soldiers. In this Man he saw not the sign of sin, but the presence of a spiritual vision and power above his own, though he had not yet marked him as the Messiah. "I might well be baptized of you," he declared, "instead of your coming to me." But Jesus saw a larger meaning than this individual application. First of all, he believed that John's movement and message were of God. He wanted to enroll himself, to pledge himself to this preparation for the Kingdom. But was there not a second and deeper meaning? His own life had never known any will but his Father's will; it had been without sin. But the sin of his people had already lain heavy upon his soul. Was it not natural that he should share in this ceremony in which the people were thus visibly confessing their sins? He and they were alike thinking, not simply of individual need and desire,

but of the nation's sin and of the salvation that was to come to the nation. Even now, before the great call came, he was bearing the sins of men.

The Baptism of the Spirit.—With the baptism of water there came a higher baptism, which John could not give: the baptism of the Spirit of God. That Spirit had been in the heart of Jesus from the beginning in a life of perfect union with the Father. But a new call was coming, a new life was beginning, and with these came a new consciousness of his relation to God, a new need, and a new and fuller presence of God in him. For the Spirit and the call came together, and each interpreted the other. "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." By such words could be meant only one thing: he himself was the Chosen One, the Messiah whom John proclaimed.

Directions for Study

Review briefly the outline of the first four lessons; think of each point in its possible relation to Jesus as boy and young man. Think, for example, of the story of the Maccabees as told to him by his mother; of what he knew of the Roman world and how he felt when he saw Roman soldiery; of how he learned Greek in Galilee from hearing it spoken (Galilee was hardly half Jewish); of his feelings toward the ways and teachings of the scribes and Pharisees.

Read Luke 2. 40-52 and Matthew 3. 13-17.

Name in order of importance what you consider the principal influences that helped to shape the life of the boy Jesus. How far are these influences working upon boys and girls to-day? What is hindering them?

From the hill crest looking down on Nazareth one can see thirty miles. Using maps and Bible, make a list of the places of historic note upon which the boy Jesus might have looked on any clear day.

Every student should have Huck's Synopsis of the First Three Gospels (Methodist Book Concern; $1, net), or Stevens and Burton, Harmony of the Gospels, preferably the former. These print the Gospel records side by side.

CHAPTER VI

CHOOSING THE WAY

What a tumult must have filled the soul of Jesus after his baptism! The day of Jehovah was at hand, the day to which his people had so long looked forward. The powers of evil were to be overthrown, the rule of God was coming. And he was to be the Deliverer, the King! The turning point in the world's history had come, and it centered now in this young carpenter from the Galilæan village. With this overwhelming conviction there had come to Jesus a new sense of the presence of God with him and in him. What followed was inevitable: "The Spirit driveth him forth." Jesus must be alone with God and with the task that God had given him. And so he goes a little farther out into the wilderness, away from John and the crowds that were coming and going. He had been called to the task and fitted for it; now he must face the question as to what the task meant. What was to be his work as the Messiah? How was he to bring in the Kingdom?

Jesus Facing the Issue

The Meaning of the Forty Days.—Nothing would be more crude or more false than to imagine that Jesus was driven into the wilderness by some blind force that he could not resist, that he was turned over to the powers of evil for a while, and that he thus underwent a kind of formal trial before beginning his work. Jesus was going aside to meditate and pray, as he did so often in his later life. The Spirit that drove him was the same inner spirit that sent him to the mount of transfiguration and to Gethsemane. Only here he was facing for the first time clearly and fully his whole life-question, and he needed not one night, but many days. In the end the prayer be-

came a great conflict and before we can understand Jesus' life we must see clearly the issue involved in that struggle.

Jesus and the Popular Hope.—Simply stated, the issue was this: What was Jesus as Messiah to do with the expectations of the people? We have already studied the outlines of this hope as held by most of the people. The kingdom of God was to be the kingdom of Israel, the triumph of Israel over her enemies. Before that came there was to be a final conflict, a last assault by Israel's foes in which these were to be overthrown. Then would come the new age with wonderful prosperity and happiness. Jerusalem would be the capital of the earth and all nations would be subject to her. The idea of the Messiah fitted into this. He was to be a figure of majesty and power, working wonders, leading Israel's forces, smiting the enemy. We see how narrow and faulty this dream was. It was national and selfish; the people thought only of Israel. It was largely external; they thought of material blessings and political triumph. They had not seen that the real enemy was not Rome, but sin and unrighteousness. All this was not a matter of theory nor theology with the people; it was the question of a practical program. Men were looking for a leader against Rome. The party of the Zealots was coming into power, summoning the people to rise. How serious it was history shows us. A generation later these people who had rejected Jesus followed the mad leadership of these Zealots, and Jerusalem went down in a terrible struggle where the city suffered as much from the folly and strife within her walls as from the awful vengeance of Rome. The question that Jesus faced was not that of his own thought about the Kingdom. He could have no sympathy with such ideas as these. But what was he to do over against such a people? Under such conditions, how was he to begin his work and lead it to success?

His Conflict with Evil

The Inner Struggle Depicted.—The story of this struggle is given to us in that picture form which is used through-

out the Bible to set forth spiritual realities. The devil appears to Jesus and bids him turn stones to bread. He carries him to a pinnacle of the temple and tells him to cast himself down. He takes him to the summit of a mountain and bids Jesus worship him. To literalize all this is to miss the real meaning of this wonderful story. How could Satan carry Jesus hither and yon, or how could Jesus suffer this? And how could any real temptation come from any Satan that appeared in body? As a matter of fact, Jesus is setting forth a great inner struggle in this picture form. In the same way we hear him say to Peter later, "Get thee behind me, Satan"; and to his disciples, returning from their victorious mission, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven."

The First Question: How Make Himself Known?—The story of the temptation reveals the three questions that occupied the mind of Jesus during this time. The first question was how should he make himself known to the people as Messiah? how persuade the people that this unknown young man was the long-awaited deliverer? They would look for some wonder at his hand. To go to Jerusalem, when the multitudes were present at some feast, to cast himself down unhurt from one of its lofty pinnacles before their eyes, would not that establish him at once? Was it not written in the Scriptures,

> **"He will give his angels charge over thee,**
> **To keep thee in all thy ways.**
> **They shall bear thee up in their hands,**
> **Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone"?**
> **(Psa. 91. 11, 12.)**

If he was the Messiah, God's Son, then he had nothing to fear from such a deed.

Jesus' Answer.—Here in the very first temptation the whole question of his work was involved. Jesus' clear spiritual vision saw through these specious suggestions, and he knew that they came from the Evil One. As to the success of such a plan, no doubt it would win him a following at once; the people were waiting for some such

wonder-worker who might do the impossible thing and overthrow Rome. But such following would be merely outward; it would hinder his real work rather than help it. Beyond this lay the deeper question: Was it right toward his Father? It might seem at first like a great act of faith, thus to throw himself upon God; it was, in fact, a tempting of God, an effort to force him instead of trusting in him. And Jesus remembered the word: "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God" (Deut. 6. 16).

How Establish the Kingdom?—Close upon this followed the other question: How should he establish his kingdom? He knew that the Kingdom was to be one of righteousness, and not of earthly power. And yet if he was to accomplish anything at all, must he not ally himself with those who held the places of power in the nation? How could he hope to do anything if the leaders of the people were against him? It was true these leaders did not share his vision; they were earthly in their hopes and selfish in their plans. But why not make some concession at the start, and then teach them the higher truth later? Why not accept the kingdoms of the world now, and then set up the kingdom of righteousness? With the same clear vision Jesus perceived that this was the prince of this world trying to lead him astray. To follow such a plan was to trust something besides God. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God," was his answer (Deut. 6. 13).

Shall He Save Himself?—These questions were not the matter of a moment. With other like thoughts they must have occupied the mind of Jesus throughout these days. Absorbed with them, he had taken little thought of food, and at the close he found himself weak with hunger. Thus the last temptation came. He had been conscious since his baptism of a new power. Now was his hour of need, why not use this power to save himself? Why not turn some of these stones to bread? Was not the Messiah necessary to the Kingdom? Must he not save himself if he was to save men? To these suggestions of doubt and evil Jesus' answer came sure and clear. Bread is not all; life itself is not all; obedience to the will of God is a man's real

life. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Deut. 8. 3).

The Meaning of His Work

The Plan of Work.—These were not the last temptations that Jesus had to meet. The same questions come to him again and again, but from the position here given he never wavers. Here at the beginning he decides what his work is to be and how it shall be done. (1) He will gain his followers not by doing wonders, but by the quiet work of teaching that shall win men's hearts and minds. To that end we see him sometimes refusing to work miracles, again bidding men be silent about his deeds of healing, and himself making no public declaration of his Messiahship until toward the end of his life. (2) He will not seek for any external power. He does not ask for any of the kingdoms of the world, and he will make no compromise to gain the support of those who are in positions of power. (3) He will avoid no danger for himself that comes in the way of his work, and he will use no power to save himself. His one concern will be to do his Father's will; what comes of this he will leave with his Father.

The Way of the Cross.—Did Jesus know at this time that the death of the cross was to cut short his work after but a little while? What he thought about his death at this time we do not know; what he said later of another matter probably applies here: "No man knoweth, not even the Son." But whether he saw the end yet or not, he had already chosen the way. The way was to be that of service in absolute obedience to the Father and in perfect trust, no matter what the cost to him might be.

"Three things are made clear by this story: (1) the spiritual insight of Jesus. How clearly he sees the principle at stake! What all other men are saying does not confuse him or lead him astray. (2) The moral victory of Jesus. Whatever powers may oppose him, whatever danger or apparent defeat may threaten, he trusts only in God and will obey him alone. (3) The human life of Jesus.

He is victorious in temptation, but he is not untempted." In this bit of autobiography Jesus revealed to his disciples his own conflict and the secret of his life. To the student of that life it is a key to all that followed. To the Christian disciple it is a story that is beyond price, bringing his Master near to him in human need, and pointing the way of victory for all that will follow.

Directions for Study

Read Matthew 4. 1-11.

Review rapidly the main points in the last two lessons. In imagination follow Jesus from the time he hears the news of John's preaching. Consider the deep impression made by John's message, and what Jesus appreciated in that message; the effect upon Jesus when he saw the response of the people to John; the revelation to Jesus of his own calling as the Messiah; and the baptism of the Spirit.

As you study each temptation, ask what this meant in relation to Jesus' work and how it became a real temptation to him.

Note the three principles of Jesus' work suggested above, and illustrate them from later events in his life.

Set forth the character of Jesus as revealed in this story.

CHAPTER VII

BEGINNING HIS WORK

After our study of the temptation we can understand the way in which Jesus began his work. His whole mind was filled with the thought of God. That living, loving God he saw in all the glorious history of the past, in all the world of men and nature about him; but above all, he knew him in his own heart. It was this thought of God, his Father, that determined all else for Jesus. It determined his idea of the Kingdom and delivered him from all the external and selfish conceptions of the people round about him. They dreamed of a Messiah working wonders and overthrowing their foes. He faced that expectation in the wilderness days and definitely broke with it. The kingdom of God, the rule of his Father, must be first of all love and peace, righteousness and good will, the reign of a new spirit among men.

Jesus the Teacher

Simply and quietly, Jesus begins his work as a wandering preacher and teacher. He does not set up his standard at some one place, as John did, and gather the throngs about him; indeed, he goes away from the multitudes again and again. He goes everywhere and speaks to folks as he meets them, by the wayside, in the market place, at the seashore, in the home, at the place of toll, and on the Sabbath in the synagogue. Such a life in itself would occasion no comment; the people were used to such preachers at this time, wandering rabbis and others. Nor was it unusual for such men to have their little company of followers, as Jesus did.

His Purpose.—The purpose of Jesus in all this is clear. As Messiah he could not, of course, always remain hidden; some time the Messiah was to stand forth before all as the Anointed One; he was to rule. As he told his disciples later, Jesus did not know just when this was to be, nor does he seem to have known under just what circumstances his reign should come; he was content to leave all that to his Father. But he did know one thing: that the people were not ready either for the Kingdom or the declaration of his Messiahship. The Zealots would have said, "Arise against Rome, and Jehovah will come for deliverance." The Pharisees would have said, "Wait in quiet, and Jehovah will come in good time and work his wonder." Jesus does neither of these things. He goes forth to prepare the people by his teaching. God must have a humble, penitent folk, showing his spirit of love in their life with men.

Where His Work Began

In Judæa.—The fourth Gospel gives us an interesting and vivid picture of the simple beginning of Jesus' work. If we had only our first three Gospels, it would appear that Jesus met Peter and James and John and Andrew almost by chance and summoned them at first sight to be his special companions. John's Gospel makes this clear by giving us an earlier chapter. Jesus had come to know all these men except James in the company of John the Baptist, and with them Philip and Nathanael. He had learned to appreciate their spirit there in the south and had probably planned to meet them again in Galilee.

He Turns to Galilee.—But any work that Jesus may have done in Judæa was incidental. His real public work, according to Mark, did not begin till after the death of John the Baptist, and then he decided to commence it in Galilee. It is significant that these men whom he won in the south were themselves Galilæans, as he was. He knew these Galilæans. They were looked down upon with good-natured contempt by the men of Jerusalem, who could easily identify them at the feast by their uncouth accent

(Matt. 26. 73). But Galilee had none of the priests of Jerusalem and far fewer of the scribes and Pharisees, and her spirit was much more open and free than that of Judæa.

The Province and the Lake.—No place except the city of his death so appeals to the follower of Christ as Galilee. Here was the home of his boyhood and the scene of by far the larger part of his ministry. Here he called his followers, the men through whom his word and his life have come down to us. Here were the cities that saw his mighty works. These shores echoed his voice. It was Galilee's fair flowers whose beauty he praised, and her singing birds which revealed to him the Father's care. Her fertile fields were far different from the rough hillsides of Judæa. And nowhere else was such a lake as Galilee! Thirteen miles long and some seven miles in its greatest width, its smiling surface mirrored innumerable boats and its waters were full of fish. Round about it lay the cities that we know so well. Beginning at the north and passing west and south were Bethsaida, Chorazin, Capernaum, Magdala, Tiberias, besides others not mentioned in Gospel pages. Across the lake lay Gamala and the city of the Gergesenes. Galilee teemed with people, even if we discount Josephus, who declares that it had two hundred and four cities and villages, the least of which had fifteen thousand inhabitants. Add to this the fact that it was covered with a network of splendid roads, and we can easily understand the quick gathering of the multitudes to which the Gospels so often refer. The lake itself bore various names, Galilee from the province, Gennesaret from the fertile plain lying on the west, and Tiberias from the like-named city.

At Capernaum

The Call of the Four.—Coming from the south toward Galilee, the road which Jesus followed touched the lake at its southern point and thence moved northward along its western shore. Capernaum lay well toward the end of this coast road, and as Jesus drew near to this city he

recognized Peter and Andrew down at the shore busy with their work as fishermen. They had talked over the matters of the coming kingdom before; now it was time to act. "Come after me," Jesus called to them; "I will make you fishers of men." Farther on was the other pair of brothers, James and John, and the same call went to them. And so the little company entered Capernaum.

The Draft of Fishes.—The great catch of fish, which Luke narrates, may have occurred on the same day before Simon Peter and his brother left their nets to follow him. Near the populous city, it was easy for a crowd to gather quickly, people who would listen to his burning words about the coming Kingdom as he was speaking to his friends, and whom he would be very ready to include in his message. As the crowd grows, Jesus at length steps into Peter's boat, that he may more easily address them. Then comes the wonderful draft of fishes at the close. It is idle to discuss whether this was a miracle or not. Of one miracle here we are sure: that was the character of Jesus itself. Luke says Peter was amazed at the draft of fishes; was he not more amazed at the man whose message he had heard and who had given the command to sink the nets? There is an ancient tradition which tells how, long years later, this same Peter gave to the young man John Mark that story of Jesus' deeds which forms our second Gospel. But greater than any word or deed of Peter's was the Master himself. On that day Peter took the first of those lessons in the appreciation of his Lord which culminated in his confession at Cæsarea Philippi.

Worship in the Synagogue.—In the city the little company seems to have gone to Peter's home. On the following Sabbath day Jesus went, as a matter of course, to the synagogue service. As we have already noted, the synagogue was the great institution of Jewish life and the Sabbath worship was its central interest. We know what the main features of that worship were at this time. There was the recitation of the Schema, so called from its opening word and composed of the passages Deuteronomy 6.

4-9; 11. 13-21; Numbers 15. 37-41. There was a prayer, probably of a fixed form. There was a lesson read from the Law and one from the Prophets, with the priestly benediction. In Palestine, at least, the lessons were read in Hebrew, then practically a dead language, and translated for the people into their common Aramaic speech. The central interest was apparently the sermon or address in which the lessons were explained.

A Democratic Service.—It was a democratic service, such as was to be found nowhere else until it reappeared in the early Christian Church. The Jewish community and the synagogue were under the control of elders, and there was a chief ruler of the synagogue (see Mark 5. 22) who had general direction of the service; but the worship itself was not conducted by him nor by any regular official, either priest or minister. The ruler simply chose from out of the congregation the one best fitted to perform this service. It was thus that Jesus came to be called upon that day, as Paul so often was later on. The emphasis of the service, however, was not upon the worship, but the instruction, especially in the Law. On another occasion we have the report of an address which Jesus gave in the Nazareth synagogue, and we know the passage from the Prophets which he read on that day. The "minister" mentioned in that instance (Luke 4. 20, Authorized Version) was not a minister in our sense of the term, but the sexton who had charge of the precious rolls of the Law, and who was sometimes the teacher of the little children as well.

The Preaching of Jesus

Not As the Scribes.—What Jesus said on this first Sabbath at Capernaum we do not know, but Mark tells us what was the chief impression that he made: "He taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes." The difference between Jesus and the scribes was not in the knowledge of the Scriptures. It is true that the scribes gave a lifetime to their study; but we know how Jesus pondered them, and how he met the scribes later on and worsted

them with these their own weapons. The difference, rather, was this: they used *authorities,* he spoke with *authority.* Their method was simply an endless dreary repetition of what had been said by other scribes in the past. Men could give a scribe no higher praise than to declare that he never said anything but what his teacher had spoken. The ideal pupil was compared to a well-plastered cistern, that let not a drop escape. If they were cisterns, Jesus was like a fountain. Fresh from his own soul the living waters poured. They could speak merely out of a dead past, telling what others had said; he poured forth the treasures of a living experience of his own. They had only endless laws and rules; he stirred men's hearts with the thought of that living and loving Presence who filled his own life. Religion for him was a living present power; for them it was a tradition.

His Message.—But there was more in the power of Jesus than the fact that he spoke directly from his own experience. He had a great message and a great purpose. We can see these in the first petition of the prayer that he taught his disciples: "Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come." Here are the message and the purpose; God and the coming Kingdom. We speak these words so often and think so little of what they mean; but Jesus' heart was filled and stirred by them, and that burning heart set fire to others. Men knew so little of this God who was all his life, and men were so far from ready for his coming reign. He must show them God, and he must make them ready. That great purpose lay back of this work of teaching. So Jesus becomes the Teacher. How patiently, how constantly, he pursues that work, whether he has before him the multitude on the mountainside or one poor woman at the well! And he follows this method to the end. When the fickle multitudes turn away, he centers upon his disciples. When he must leave the north, he turns to Jerusalem. His last days find him still preaching, still warning and appealing, though he knows with what little promise of success: O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! If thou hadst known!

Directions for Study

Read John 1. 35-51; Mark 1. 14-22; Luke 5. 1-11.

Review briefly the last three lessons and try to realize the situation: the nation stirred by John, Jesus' visit to John and his call, Jesus facing the question of his lifework. Try to understand the problem that Jesus faced as to how he should begin his work.

Study the passages from John and Mark together. Note that Jesus is using at the very beginning his first great method: to win individual men and work through them. It is a very simple beginning, but consider what these men meant later on for the church and the Kingdom.

In connection with Luke 5. 3 and Mark 1. 21, 22, consider Jesus' second great method, that of teaching. Run over hastily the outline of Jesus' life and see how much of it is taken up with teaching, and how this work continues to the very end.

Make a list of the different places and conditions in which Jesus taught; of his different classes of hearers.

What are the chief qualities in his teaching?

CHAPTER VIII

JESUS' MINISTRY TO THE SICK

THE humanness of Jesus is one of the striking facts that stand out in the gospel story. He was a teacher as were the rabbis; he was a preacher as was John the Baptist. And yet how different he was! There was a difference in his message, as we shall see, but an even greater difference in his life. The contrast with John the Baptist Jesus himself pointed out: "John . . . is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a demon. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" John lived apart; Jesus lived with men and entered into every part of their life. He wept where men sorrowed. He shared in the joy of the wedding feast. He lived with the poor and took their humble fare; but he did not hesitate to accept the hospitality of the rich. He ate with Simon the Pharisee, a church pillar; but he accepted also a dinner given in his honor by one whom church and society both scorned, the taxgatherer Levi.

Two facts help to explain this life of Jesus. (1) He was not afraid of the world. It was God's world; he did not have to run away from it to find God. (2) He loved men. Their joys, their sorrows, their needs were all dear to him. The service of men was a passion with him, not a mere duty. All this we shall see as we study in the following chapters his ministry to the sick, his ministry to the sinful, and his life with his friends.

THE LIFE OF SERVICE

The Messiah as Servant.—The personal service which Jesus gave was not a mere incident in his life; he accounted it his business. Here again we see how deep the gulf was

between Jesus' thought and that of the people. They thought that the Messiah would come to rule, making others serve him. Jesus knew that he was come to serve, to minister to others. Recall the scene in the synagogue at Nazareth, where Jesus stands up to read the lesson from Isaiah (Luke 4. 16-21). Those beautiful words of the prophet he took as a program for his own life; the words were fulfilled that day in him. We get the echo of these same words in the message that he sends to John, when he speaks of the blind that see and the poor that have good tidings preached to them (Luke 7. 18-23). When the evangelists sum up his ministry, they point to the same life of service: "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd" (Matt. 9. 35, 36).

A Ministry to All Need.—One other fact is to be pointed out as to this life of service: it was a ministry to the whole life of man. Jesus never separated the spiritual from the material; he was not come simply to serve the souls of men. Life is one and men are not to be saved piecemeal. He fed the multitudes to whom he had preached, he comforted the sorrowing, he healed the sick, he stopped to bless the little children. No wonder that all who were in need flocked to him. The gospel pages are full of these poor folks: publicans and harlots, the wretched poor, parents in distress for their children, the blind, lame, paralytic, epileptic, insane.

Jesus and the Sick

The Sick in Jesus' Day.—Among all these needy ones the sick in body and mind stand out first. There is sickness enough in our own day. Of late we have been learning that, despite our progress, scores of thousands of lives are needlessly lost each year and many millions of dollars of

loss are represented in needless disease. And yet ours is like another world compared with that day. Men knew nothing of sanitation or medical science. The hot climate and the lack of cleanliness made diseases of the eyes especially common. Equally common were the mental and nervous diseases, insanity, epilepsy, and melancholia. And there was little help for all such. There were many who could say with the poor woman (Mark 5. 25) that they had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that they had, and were nothing bettered, but, rather, grew worse. The healers of that day joined physical and spiritual means together; but the physical was mostly quackery and the spiritual was superstitious incantation. It was this mass of unrelieved suffering that touched Jesus.

The Demoniacs.—Jesus seems to have been especially moved by the plight of the demoniacs, those men who felt themselves possessed with evil spirits, such as the one whom he met that first Sabbath in the Capernaum synagogue. The matter of demon possession is beset with great difficulties, and men have differed in interpreting these incidents. The Jews of that time shared in the ideas regarding evil spirits that were common in the Orient of that day. Where we seek for natural causes, they often sought an explanation in spirits. This was especially true of mental or nervous diseases like insanity and epilepsy, where it seemed that another spirit had entered into the sufferer. Mark 5. 2-5 seems to show a case of insanity, and Mark 9. 18 one of epilepsy. Some cases, no doubt, were those of serious moral lapse, where a man had been mastered by some vice or evil passion. Such an instance Jesus seems to have had in mind in the parable of Matthew 12. 43-45, and the demoniac at Capernaum may have been such a man. But aside from these mental and moral disorders, they sought for the cause of physical ill also in evil spirits. This was especially true when the illness was sudden, or with some stubborn complaint like rheumatism; in other words, when the usual explanations were wanting. These sufferers had to bear not only physical ill but superstitious fear as well.

The Demoniac of Capernaum.—It was in the synagogue at Capernaum that Jesus had his first encounter with one of these demoniacs. In this case apparently the "unclean spirit" meant the bondage of an evil life. The searching words of Jesus had stirred the dormant conscience, and the holy presence of Jesus had done even more than his words. Helpless and hopeless, he yet protested against being thus disturbed in his old life: "What have we to do with thee, . . . the Holy One of God?" How far Jesus shared the common view of his day as to evil spirits we do not know. One thing is clear: he had none of the superstitious fear with which others looked upon these helpless sufferers. God was greater than all evil, and God could deliver this poor bound child of his. He uses no magical formulas and passes, such as the scribes employed. In simple trust in his Father he charges the evil spirit to depart, and the sufferer stands before him clean and whole (Mark 1. 21-28).

The Healings of Jesus

How Jesus Healed.—The cure of the demoniac was but the beginning of a great ministry of healing. Whatever the evil that came before him, Jesus faced it with the same joyous conviction as to the power and mercy of God; he healed the lame and blind just as he forgave men's sins. How did he do it? For many of these cases we have analogies in the power of suggestion as used even to-day. There are others that cannot be accounted for in any such way. Such explanations are interesting, but not necessarily final for Christian faith. If we believe that the God of mercy and power was present in Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world, then we shall not wonder at any such deed of power. Jesus himself so regarded these healings as the deed of God. "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you" (Luke 11. 20).

The Cost of Healing.—Two further facts should be noted about Jesus' healings. In the first place, it was no mere word lightly spoken by which Jesus healed. It was per-

sonal service and it meant a personal cost. He did not heal men in the mass; he gave special attention to each. It was exhausting labor; it demanded his thought, his faith, his deepest sympathies. It took time, keeping him from other labors, and often from taking needed rest and food. He did not think of it simply as the curing of a disease, but as the helping and saving of men. In the second place, such healing demanded something of others as well; it was religious healing. Again and again its relation to faith is brought out. "Thy faith hath made thee whole," says Jesus to blind Bartimæus and to the woman with the issue of blood. Sometimes he asks men whether they have faith (Matt. 9. 28). Often it is the faith of another that is involved. Again it is said significantly that he cannot do many mighty works in Nazareth because of their unbelief.

The Place of Healing in Jesus' Work

The Healings at Capernaum.—This ministry of healing seems to have been thrust upon Jesus all at once and to its full extent there at Capernaum. After the synagogue service he goes to Peter's house and heals the latter's mother-in-law. Meanwhile the city is stirred by the report of his teaching and the healing of the demoniac. Impatiently the people waited for the close of the Sabbath, which came with the sunset. For them to have carried the sick to Jesus on the Sabbath, or for him to have touched them with his hand to heal them, they would have considered a breaking of the law. But with the sunset they began to come. "And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many demons." And with the earliest daylight the throngs came again looking for Jesus.

A New Danger Faced and Conquered.—The four disciples were stirred with joy and pride. The great city of Capernaum was turning to their Master. It was a noble beginning for his work. To Jesus himself this success brought very different feelings. It had set before him a problem not unlike those of the wilderness days. His power

of healing had moved all the people; he might make all Galilee his own in a little while. But was he not in danger of gaining the kingdoms of the world and losing the kingdom of the soul? These people were looking for signs and wonders, but was he reaching their conscience? Jesus had one way of meeting these questions: that of meditation and prayer. While darkness still lay upon the city he steals out to a desert place to pray. There, at length, the disciples find him as they come with their eager message, telling of the crowds that are looking for him. But he has found his answer: he will not be a mere wonder-worker or healer. His first business must be to prepare the hearts and minds of men. "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth." He continues his work of healing, his heart answers as before to the suffering about him; but he keeps his task of preaching first, and he does not want men to follow him because of these works. He heals the leper, moved with pity for him, but he dismisses him at once and charges him sternly to speak to no man about it (Mark 1. 40-45).

Directions for Study

Read Mark 1. 21-45; Matthew 9. 35-38; Luke 4. 16-21; 7. 18-23.

Try to form for yourself pictures of the following, using every suggestion which these passages give: (1) the sickness and misery of that time; (2) the sympathy and pity of Jesus (collect all the expressions in these passages which refer to this); (3) the stir made by these healings and the sudden fame of Jesus; (4) the difficulties in the way of Jesus' work caused by this sudden fame and by the throngs curious to see wonders, but indifferent to his message.

Consider all the passages that you can find which suggest the bearing of faith upon these healings. As to the faith of others than the one healed, note Matthew 8. 13; 15. 28; Mark 5. 34, 36; 9. 23; and compare John 11. 40.

Make at least a partial list of the agencies which are carrying on this work of help and healing to-day. Begin in your own community and follow it out till you reach such work as that of mission hospitals or the Red Cross work. How much of this is due to the example and inspiration of Jesus? To how much of this work is your church related directly, or through its members, or by its gifts?

CHAPTER IX

THE MINISTRY TO THE SINFUL

We have seen that Jesus left Capernaum after that first memorable Sabbath, refusing to settle down as a healer and wonder-worker. Apparently he carried out his plan and made a preaching trip through the Galilæan villages. All we know definitely, however, is what Mark tells us, that "he entered again into Capernaum after some days." The rumor of his return was enough to bring the crowds together, filling not only the house, but the street in front. They were full of eager interest. What new signs would he do? Whom would he heal? But Jesus had a deeper concern than even his sympathy for the sick. It was the sin of men that burdened him, the loss of God out of their lives. In a striking way there began here his ministry to the sinful, a ministry that drew no crowds like his healings, but stirred the bitter opposition of the religious leaders.

Jesus and the Sinners

The Paralytic Forgiven.—The story of the paralytic is one of those dramatic incidents which delighted us as children. This man was poor in health, but rich in having four good friends. These had no sooner heard of Jesus' return than they determined that they would bring the sick man to him. The crowded street did not balk them. The Jewish house was covered with a flat roof, reached by an outer stairway and a common place of resort for the family. Thither they betook themselves, and uncovered enough of the roof to let their friend down into the room. It was just such faith and determination that Jesus was looking for, and he responded to it at once. He had been preaching about the coming Kingdom, and that repentance

and faith by which men were to prepare for it. What he read in the face of the man before him we do not know, but he must have found an answer to his message. And so he offered this man not health first of all, but a greater gift: "Son, thy sins are forgiven."

His words must have been a surprise to his hearers. To certain scribes that were present they were more than this: they were blasphemy. Who could forgive sins except God? Jesus does not stop to explain his religion of mercy. He answers by a deed which shows that God is with him; he has given the greater gift of forgiveness, now he bestows the lesser and bids the man rise and walk.

The Ministry of Forgiveness.—So Jesus begins, according to Mark, his ministry of forgiveness. If the ministry to the sick occupied a great place in Jesus' life, this was even greater, and, indeed, was the very heart of his ministry and message. The sinners came flocking to him as they had to John, but from him they gained a message of hope and inspiration such as John could not give. Some of Jesus' most beautiful words are freighted with this theme, such as the parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son. No need of men moved Jesus so deeply as this. No part of his ministry is so characteristic as this. It was his association with these "sinners" that showed how deep was the gulf that separated Jesus from the accepted leaders of the people, and it was this, more than anything else, that brought down upon him the enmity of these scribes and Pharisees.

Who Were the "Sinners"

The Pharisaic Idea of Religion.—In order to understand this ministry of Jesus and his conflict with the Pharisees, we must realize what the men of his day meant by "sinners." We may put the difference between their use and ours in a sentence; for us the word has a moral meaning, for them its meaning was mainly formal or ritual. It is one's idea of religion that determines one's idea of sin. For us religion is something spiritual and ethical, a right relation to God and a right life flowing from this. The

Pharisees too laid the stress upon righteousness, but righteousness with them was mainly something formal and ceremonial. Religion was an endless set of rules, whose chief concern was not what was just and loving between man and man, but ceremonial purity. Holiness was not so much being true and humble before God; it meant, rather, keeping "clean" according to these rules. It was largely a matter of separation, something formal and negative. There were endless things to be avoided, various kinds of food, vessels, places, objects, and men; and there were endless forms to be gone through.

The "Sinners."—To keep all these rules was a tremendous task, and for many people impossible, so that it came about that great masses of the people were "sinners" in the eyes of these leaders. They had not the leisure to study the laws and keep the rules, or else they did not have the means. For the average poor man in his daily work, especially in Galilee where there were so many Gentiles, had to come into contact with men and things that were not clean. Such people formed the bulk of the "sinners" who meet us in the Gospels. They were called "the people of the land," a phrase which had come to mean nothing but contempt with the scribes. We catch the sneer in the words reported in John 7. 49: "This multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed." Though they did not keep the law, these people shared that general idea of religion which condemned them. They felt themselves accursed, without hope, though often bitter in their hatred of the scribes. To associate with such people, especially at table, meant to drop to their level of defilement.

The Publicans.—There were, of course, sinners of another type that came to Jesus, of whom the harlots and the publicans are especially mentioned. The publicans were not necessarily immoral men in the common sense, but as a class they seem to have deserved the ill repute in which they were held not simply in Palestine, but throughout the empire. It shows how they were estimated that their names should be so often bracketed with the harlots, even by Jesus himself, or with the Gentiles. There was

special reason for their execration in Palestine, at least so far as they were Jews, for here they seemed like traitors who had sold themselves for a reward to the hated enemy and were helping Rome to oppress their own people. Such men were wholly without the pale. They were shunned like a pestilence and were not even allowed to enter the synagogue.

The Meaning of This Ministry

Levi and His Friends.—Now we can understand the meaning of the incident which Mark reports as following upon the healing of the paralytic. Capernaum was an important center for the collection of taxes. Here was taken the toll upon all goods brought into Herod's territory from that of his brother Philip, and from the rich Decapolis across the lake. One of these Jewish renegades by the name of Levi had charge of the Capernaum customs house, which was down by the lakeside. It may have been that he had heard Jesus speak elsewhere. In any case Jesus knew his man, and when he passed by the customs house and summoned him, Levi left his business at once and followed him. And so the fifth member of Jesus' inner circle was a despised publican. Apparently, like Simon, he received a new name, and was known thereafter as Matthew. What followed aroused the scribes still more. Levi seems to have become a missionary at once, bearing the news of his own discipleship and of his new Master, and so other publicans and sinners began to follow Jesus. Jesus not only preached to these men, but welcomed them personally, and finally, upon invitation of Levi, he became the guest of honor at a supper where all these friends were present. He could have done nothing that would have shocked more the religious leaders or have violated more flagrantly the religious standards. At no place were the rules of purity so strict as in matters of eating. The publicans, of course, paid no attention to these rules, and he who sat with them defiled himself and made himself like them. The action of Jesus was a definite break with the acknowledged religious leaders and accepted standards.

The Motive of Sympathy.—If we ask for the meaning of this conduct of Jesus, we shall find two answers. In the first place, it was because Jesus loved men and counted it his mission to serve them. That was what he had come for, to save just such men and lead them to the true life. If the sick and suffering moved him, then these much more. The greatest evil was not the loss of sight and hearing, but the loss of God and the slavery to sin. He saw these poor folks bound by sin, blind to the real treasures of life, the prey of fear, anxious about food and drink. They were the burdened and heavy-laden. And no one cared for them; they were as sheep having no shepherd. And so we have the pity of Jesus over against the harsh condemnation of the scribe.

Jesus' Idea of God.—But there is another reason to be given for this difference between Jesus and the scribes. It was not simply a difference in spirit, but in the whole conception of God and of religion. For the scribes God was primarily a lawgiver and judge, giving men rules and then condemning or rewarding. Before such a God these sinners stood condemned and hopeless. For Jesus, God was the Father, not blind to the sin of his children, but pitying them and yearning over them, and seeking to bring every wayward child back into fellowship with himself. When they accused him, he simply showed them that he was acting according to the spirit of his Father (Luke 15). No matter how foolish and sinful, every lost child is precious to God. He goes out to look for them and all heaven rejoices when one is brought back (Luke 15. 3-10). No matter what they have done, God waits with forgiveness when his sons turn back (Luke 15. 11-32). God is holy, but that does not mean that he withdraws himself from sinners, but that he draws them to him in love and mercy. Holiness is not separation, but love.

Of Religion.—With such a thought of God, Jesus' idea of religion was naturally different from that of the Pharisees and scribes. It is what we think of God that decides our idea of religion, that is, our idea of what will please God. The holiness that Jesus believed in was a

holiness like that of his Father, a holiness of love and mercy. Such a holiness, instead of separating Jesus from men, drove him to them. Nothing seemed to him more according to his Father's will than to go to such sinners and help them. And so he made answer to their criticisms: God wants mercy, not sacrifices, as the prophet said long ago. It is the sick that need a physician, not the well. I am come to save sinners, not to serve the saints (Mark 2. 17).

Two Parables

Two Surprises.—Two great surprises came to Jesus in his ministry. One was the attitude of the leaders. From the worldly Sadducean party he had not expected much; but these leaders, the scribes and Pharisees, he had been taught to respect from his youth. Now he found them blind leaders of the blind, not only unwilling to enter the Kingdom, but opposing his work and trying to keep others out. The other surprise was that of the sinners. They turned to him just as they had to John. How he rejoices over them! The humility, the penitence, the eager earnestness which he missed with the Pharisees, he found in them. It was these publicans and harlots and despised common people that were pressing into the Kingdom. That was one of the wonders of God's wisdom and mercy: he was hiding these things from the wise and understanding and revealing them unto these babes (Matt. 11. 25).

The Two Sons.—Two parables in particular express the experience of Jesus with these two classes. The first is that of the two sons (Matt. 21. 28-32). The Pharisees were the pillars of orthodoxy and the exemplars of piety, recognized as such by all. With their much religious profession, they were like the son who said, "I go, sir," but went not. When Jesus came with God's great call they were disobedient. The publicans and harlots had not been doing God's will; they were like the second son who had said, "I will not." But in the end they repented and went. Thus it was they who really met the test of obedience, and not the Pharisees.

The Messianic Feast.—The same lesson comes in the parable of the Messianic feast (Luke 14. 15-24). The picture of a feast was one of the common means used by the Jews to set forth the glories of the Messianic age, for which everyone was longing. One day while they were at table, one of those people who can use pious phrases easily and without meaning called out to Jesus, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Yes, said Jesus, that will be a great blessing, and you all believe yourselves eager for it. But the fact is that you are refusing this blessing to-day and those whom you despise are making ready to receive it. It is like the story of the great supper which a man once gave. You would have expected everyone to be most eager to come. Instead, those who were invited found excuses for staying away, and in the end the beggars of the street were brought in to eat the feast.

Directions for Study

Briefly review the events in Jesus' life since he answered the summons of John's preaching and went to the Jordan.

Read carefully the Scripture passages for this chapter: Mark 2. 1-17; Luke 15. 1, 2; Matthew 21. 28-32; Luke 14. 15-24.

Has our study thus far shown us some underlying principle determining Jesus' life? Could we call that principle obedience and trust in relation to his Father, and love and service in relation to men? Note how this principle of service would mean first preaching (telling the good news), next healing, and finally forgiving.

With pencil and paper write from memory as long a list as you can of the sinners whom Jesus helped, from the paralytic at Capernaum to the thief on the cross.

Give a definition of sin. What does forgiveness mean?

The third Gospel is peculiarly the Gospel of mercy, the Gospel of the poor and the sinful. Make a list of the passages peculiar to Luke which express sympathy with the poor, which condemn or warn the rich, which record deeds of mercy and healing, which deal with sinners and their forgiveness.

CHAPTER X

THE COMPANIONS OF JESUS

So far we have been considering Jesus by himself, but this would give a wrong picture of his life. Nothing is more significant of Jesus' life than that company of friends and followers which was constantly with him. Mark's first picture shows us Jesus calling the four to himself before he begins preaching or healing. Thereafter we never find him alone. They go with him to the table of the rich. On the lonely ways they are his company. They form the inner circle in the days of his popularity when the crowds press upon him. They go with him when he fares forth from Galilee, a fugitive and in danger. A few are present even in those moments of his most intimate experience, on the mountain top and in the Garden. And they remain with him. They protest when he goes to Jerusalem, but they follow nevertheless; and though they scatter and flee upon his arrest, yet the last solemn scene shows a little group of the faithful near the cross.

Those Who Followed

The Larger and Lesser Company.—When we think of the companions of Jesus we usually think of the twelve, but the circle was larger than this. We read of large numbers who went with him. John tells us of a crisis when many of these disciples "walked no more with him" (6. 66). The reference is plainly not to the believers who were simply occasional hearers, but to those who had for a while joined his company. There were women among these followers, some of whose names we know: "Mary that was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out,

and Joanna the wife of Chuzas Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others" (Luke 8. 1-3). A number of these, like Joanna, must have been well-to-do, as they helped to provide for Jesus and his company. Mark tells us that these courageous women followed him on the last journey to Jerusalem, and were present at the cross. Two of these he mentions by name (Mark 15. 40, 41). Of this larger group the twelve formed the inner and permanent center.

Conditions for Joining.—What did Jesus demand of men as a condition for joining his company? It is interesting first of all to see what he did not require. He did not use any outward form, not even the rite of baptism required by John. Whatever the reference in John 4. 1, 2 may mean, there is no suggestion anywhere that Jesus himself baptized or asked the twelve to baptize those who wished to follow him. He did not require any statement of belief, not even the confession of his Messiahship, for this he did not openly declare until late in his ministry. What he asked was very simple, "Come, follow me." And yet the demand was searching enough, far more than what we commonly ask of men to-day. First of all, while he set up no creed, yet he asked for faith, that men should receive his word as a word from God and trust in him. He asked for the eager heart and the open mind, anxious to accept the truth. It was a narrow gate of childlikeness, of humility and trust. Hence these were called disciples; that is, learners. They accompanied Jesus in order that they might better learn his teaching. In the second place, this simple "follow me" meant obedience. These men and women were not simply learners, but followers. Repent and believe, he said. Repentance meant "about-face." They were to hate the old evil and turn their face toward the Kingdom, that rule of God which he was bringing. To say, "Lord, Lord," meant nothing; it was those who did the will of his Father who were to him brother and sister and mother (Mark 3. 35).

Companions of the Road.—There was, indeed, one outward sign of this discipleship in that these followers

"walked with him." The phrase suggests the special character of this group. They did not, of course, include all those who believed on him. Some of them, the twelve, he had called for a special purpose; others were with him that they might receive fuller instruction or might serve him. The Gospels suggest that Jesus gave such special instruction not simply to the twelve, but to the larger group, explaining to them more fully the truths of the Kingdom which he brought to the multitudes in brief parables. This larger group was changeable. Only a few, like the women who followed him to Jerusalem, could afford to stay a long time with him; and some of the time, as when he had to flee Galilee, it seems that only the twelve accompanied him. It was from this larger group that Judas' successor was later chosen (Acts 1. 21).

The Call.—There was a certain masterfulness in Jesus' way with men. "He calleth unto him whom he himself would; and they went unto him" (Mark 3. 13). It was the voice of one who spoke for God and had the right to command. He bids the brothers leave their nets and boats, and Levi his place of business. He commands this man to leave the dead unburied, he tells another that he must not look back when his hand is on the plow, and summons the rich young ruler to sell all his property. The men of the inner circle of the twelve Jesus himself selected, and most of those of the larger circle seem also to have come at his request. Others asked permission, like the scribe of Matthew 8. 19 and the Gadarene demoniac (Mark 5. 18, 19). Some, like the last-named, he did not accept; the Gadarene was to be his disciple, but to serve him in his home town. Some, on the other hand, refused his call, like the rich young man whose possibilities Jesus saw and whom he craved for this special relation (Mark 10. 21, 22).

The Purpose and the Method of Jesus

The Twelve.—It is when we come to the smaller circle of the twelve that we see most clearly the purpose and method of Jesus. The choice of the twelve was apparently

made gradually, with at least a brief time for acquaintance and testing. Five were settled upon almost at the beginning: the two pairs of brothers, Andrew and Peter, James and John, and the tax gatherer Levi. Later the full number of the twelve was completed. Undoubtedly there were some outside the twelve who stood very close to Jesus as friends, but this was the definite and permanent center of his following.

The Purpose.—Mark states clearly and simply what Jesus' purpose was in thus choosing the twelve: "that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth" (Mark 3. 14). It very soon became clear that Jesus could not do much with the multitudes that came to him. They were quite ready to gaze at wonders, to eat loaves and fishes, and even to acclaim him as Messianic King if he should give them occasion. But that was not what he sought. What he needed was to move men to repentance and by patient teaching to show them the meaning of the Kingdom. The crowds gave little opportunity for such teaching and made little response to it. It was clear that he must begin with a little company and through them reach others. Jesus himself seems to have seen that from the beginning.

The Threefold Task.—Three tasks awaited Jesus with this little company. He must instruct them. They had caught a vision and answered his call; he had stirred their souls and they trusted him. But the Gospels tell us frankly how slow they were to see. They were still Jews, with minds filled with the thought of an earthly kingdom. Line upon line, precept upon precept, he must give them the new message, until the time should come when they would proclaim from the housetops what now they were learning in secret. The next task was to train their souls. Dreams of selfish ambition went with their thoughts of the Kingdom, and we see these cropping out almost to the very last. Judas, it would seem, fell a prey to the temptations that came from such ideas, betraying the Master who would not seize a crown. These men needed to learn the spirit of Christ; the kingdom of the Spirit could be established

only by men whom that Spirit filled and controlled. And the final task was to make clear and sure their faith in himself. They had trusted him and followed him, but that trust must issue in a clear and definite faith. They must learn to know his place in the Kingdom and his meaning for men. Only thus would they be ready to bear witness, and it was for this end that he was training them (Acts 1. 22; John 15. 27). Such was the purpose of Jesus in that training of the twelve to which he gave so large a part of his ministry.

The Method: Teaching and Fellowship.—The method of Jesus is a lesson to his followers for all time, and especially to parents and all that train the young. It was first the method of the teacher. Patiently, persistently, over and over again, with changing explanation and illustration, he taught them the lessons of the Kingdom, what the spirit of the Father was, what should be the life of his sons. His speech was that of their daily life, his pictures were all from the world they knew; the farmer, the merchant, the housewife, the little incidents in their own circle, all yielded their lesson. But beyond the method of the teacher was that of the friend. Hand in hand with this teaching, enforcing it, illustrating it, transcending it, was personal fellowship. It was more than an example lived before them: it was a life that he gave them. He poured into their lives his own faith and courage and strength, his love and patience and pity. We say of Jesus that he gave his life on the cross; he had been giving it through all these days. The lesson stands out for all who would serve: it costs life to save life.

The Results.—The results of this work did not appear at once. These were not saints whom Jesus chose, they were just men in the making. But he who chose them knew what was in them. That was true even in Judas' case. Those qualities in Judas which had led the company to choose him to carry their common funds and arrange their practical affairs Jesus himself must have seen and valued. The eleven were slow in learning. Again and again he calls them "little-faith" men. But they met the

test at last. Only one failed the Master. Men are not machines. The highest power of heaven will not avail unless the soul of the man makes answer. And the answer from Judas was wanting. But the method of Jesus did not fail. We can measure the success of the method by what these men became and by what they did. These men who had been so fearful stand up as fearless witnesses in the city that put their Lord to death. The men who had been selfish and ambitious seem to lose every aim and desire but that of service, and some of them seal that service in the martyr's death. The men who were so slow to understand became the world's teachers of a new spiritual faith. All that we know of Jesus' words is what these men stored up in their hearts. The matchless picture of his Spirit and life has come to us through them alone, a picture which no man could have handed on except as the Spirit of Christ was in his own soul. The Christian Church of nineteen centuries has rested upon the foundations laid by these Galilæan peasants, whose only training was in the school of the Master.

The Fellowship

Their Life Together.—Of the actual daily life which the twelve lived with their Master we have little detailed knowledge. We know that they were friends and that they shared all things. Where Jesus went as guest, they went. There was a common purse for their needs. In Galilee, at least, they would not lack for hospitality. The disciples were not necessarily poor. Peter and Andrew and James and John came from homes where there were some means. There were contributions too that came from friends, like the women noted above, and in that simpler day and sunnier clime their needs would not be great. Sometimes they may have slept beneath the open sky. Their journeyings, of course, were all on foot. Their usual food was of the simplest kind. But they shared it, and what a rich life it must have been! What talks there were along the way! What vision of gracious deeds! But more than all

was the simple presence of that Spirit, of that life, where they saw wrought out

> "The creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought."

Long centuries have passed, but our hearts still thrill at the thought of that great friendship, that matchless privilege.

> "O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
> O calm of hills above,
> Where Jesus knelt to share with thee
> The silence of eternity,
> Interpreted by love!"

The Meaning of Friendship to Jesus.—There is yet another aspect of this fellowship, and that is what it meant to Jesus. We are so wont to forget the simple human life of Jesus. Nothing speaks to us so convincingly and so appealingly of this, as Jesus' friendships. He wanted these companions for the work of the Kingdom, but he wanted them also for his own sake. He needed sympathy not less, but more than other men. He was no mere master and patron; he was a friend, the incomparable Friend of all the ages. But friendship expressed his own need as well as theirs. "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," he says on that last night when he was so loath to let them go. And then he adds a little later, thinking back over the days now nearly ended which he had spent with these loyal friends, "Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations" Luke 22. 15, 28). A few hours later, in the agony of his last conflict, he turns to these same friends for sympathy (Mark 14. 37). Thinking of him thus as a friend, we shall readily understand why he had his special friends within and without the circle of the twelve. Within are Peter and James and John, whom we find him calling to himself in the great crises of his life (Mark 5. 37; 9. 2; 14. 33). And then there are such homes as those of Peter in Capernaum and Mary and Martha at Bethany, to the latter of

which Jesus seems to have gone more than once as to a haven of peace.

Directions for Study

We are trying in these first chapters to gain a picture of Jesus' life and work. Sum up the outstanding ideas that have come from the last three chapters, and let them form such a picture: the wandering preacher with his earnest, joyous, yet searching message; the crowds that gathered; the wonderful healings; the ministry to the sinners and Jesus' association with them. Now we are to add another and most important feature to the picture: the circle of followers about Jesus.

Read over carefully the Scripture passages: Mark 3. 13-19; Matthew 10. 1-16; Luke 10. 17-20; 8. 1-3. Note that these passages refer to the inner circle of the twelve and their sending forth, and to the women as representative of the larger circle.

In reading the narrative, try first of all to form a picture of the group of Jesus and his disciples and the life which they lived together. Picture them upon the road. Can you not see Peter in the lead, and John nearest to Jesus? Did Judas walk by himself?

Study next the question of Jesus' purpose in having this circle and the method he used. How far do we need that method to-day?

Consider what this fellowship meant to Jesus and what it meant for the disciples.

Finally, try to state what this company and Jesus' work with them meant for the church and the world.

What qualities does Jesus show here which make him the ideal friend?

CHAPTER XI

POPULARITY AND OPPOSITION

The work in Galilee which we have been studying marks the first great period of Jesus' life. What did he accomplish? Why did he not go on? With what purpose did he turn from Galilee? In seeking the answer to these questions we shall study first the popularity of Jesus and the growing opposition that he met.

The Time of Popularity

Early Favor.—The Gospel pages show plainly the great popularity of Jesus during this ministry in Galilee. Wherever he appears the crowds at once gather. They press into the house so that he and his friends cannot even take food (Mark 3. 20). The throng is so great by the side of the lake that he must get into a boat in order to speak to them (Mark 3. 9). He leaves the cities, but the crowds gather in the country places to which he goes; and when he and his friends try to escape for a little rest, they discover his plan and are awaiting him when he arrives (Mark 1. 45; 6. 31-33). He has the same experience when he crosses to the other side of the lake (Mark 6. 53-56). Populous Galilee could easily furnish such crowds, but by this time his fame had spread and they came from afar as well: from the regions of Tyre and Sidon on the west and north, from Judæa on the south, from Idumæa lying beyond Judæa, from across Jordan on the east.

The Reason for It.—The reason for this sudden response is not hard to see. The nation, already filled with hopes and dreams, had been stirred from end to end by John's message of the kingdom at the door. As soon as Jesus began to attract attention by his healings, men at once

began to associate him with this idea of the coming kingdom. Not that they thought of him as the Messiah; he was one of the prophets, John the Baptist risen again, or Elijah, or Jeremiah.

Misunderstanding and Opposition

Early Opposition.—This popularity was largely upon the surface. Beneath the surface there were misunderstanding and opposition almost from the beginning, and this brought its inevitable result in the end. For Jesus himself the attitude of his friends and kindred must have been hardest to bear. When he began his work he did not at first go to his old home. But the news did not take long to reach Nazareth, the astonishing stories of what Jesus, the son of Joseph, was doing: his teaching, his healings, the great crowds, his daring opposition to the scribes and Pharisees whom all acknowledged as leaders. Friends went to see and hear, and at last his mother and brothers came. They heard many things, no doubt, these friends of his, but they seemed to have missed the one and chief matter, the message of Jesus. No wonder that they thought him beside himself and that his mother and brothers sent word to him, wishing to take him home. But that message, God's message, was everything to Jesus. He had put it first in his own life, he must make it the test for all others, even his kindred. "Who is my mother and my brother?" "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mark 3. 31-35). Henceforth his gospel was to be the new tie, rising above kinship and friendship, nation and speech, binding men in a new and universal fellowship. But it was to bring division also, and the sorrow of such division Jesus now felt.

His Visit Home.—It was probably somewhat later than this that Jesus visited his home (Luke 4. 16-30). He had left the first and narrower sphere of work near the lake and with his disciples was moving through the towns of Galilee. At last one Sabbath day he found himself in

the familiar synagogue at Nazareth. It was not so many months since he had left it, but how much had happened in that time! The service began. The lesson from the law was apparently read by another; to Jesus was given the lesson from the prophets. It was the roll of the prophet Isaiah that was handed him, and he read the opening verses of the sixty-first chapter.

His Rejection at Nazareth.—After the custom of the synagogue, when Jesus had completed the lesson he began to speak. What would he say to these townsmen and friends? The lesson had spoken of a new and glorious day. "To-day," said Jesus, "hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." They could not deny the grace and power of his words, but such a declaration seemed presumptuous. This was the son of the village carpenter. They knew his mother and brothers and sisters. What did he mean by this manner of authority? Why should he say that the prophet's message was fulfilled that day? Let him do for them some of the wonders that were talked about in Capernaum, then they might listen to him. Jesus read their unbelief in their faces. It was the same experience: cavil and criticism, blindness to his message. He had brought them the glorious word that the day of which the prophet spoke was near; instead of penitence and rejoicing, this was the answer. "And he marveled because of their unbelief" (Mark 6. 6). But when he met their unbelief, not by working wonders, but by the proverb about the prophet honored everywhere except at home, they became angry; "and they rose up and cast him forth out of the city."

Conflicts with the Leaders

Opposition Gradually Rising.—The enmity of old neighbors and the unbelief of his kindred were but passing events, however they may have wounded Jesus. Deeper in its passion and more fateful in its consequences was the attitude of the leaders of the people, the scribes and Pharisees. In freer Galilee the Pharisees were not so strong as in Jerusalem; yet here too they were the acknowl-

edged leaders in piety as the scribes were the recognized authority in religion. They had no occasion to oppose Jesus at first. To them he was one of many teachers seeking to instruct the people in the way of righteousness. He made no attack upon the law, and he and his disciples attended the synagogue and went up to the great feasts at Jerusalem. Very early, however, they found occasion to note his lack of strictness in keeping certain laws and to criticize his association with "sinners." Gradually they came to see that here was a different conception of religion that would overthrow their teachings and their authority, and so there came at last the settled and bitter hostility.

The Cause of Conflict: the Religion of Rules.—The first source of conflict was in connection with those endless rules the keeping of which made up the main part of religion for the average Jew. The study of these rules was the great business of the scribes; their keeping was the very life of the Pharisees. The welfare of men, the demands of mercy and righteousness, were lost sight of. The keeping of these rules was an end in itself to which other things had to bend. A physician, for example, might help on the Sabbath in a matter of life and death, but he was not allowed to set a broken limb or pour cold water on a sprained ankle.

Sabbath Healings.—Jesus' chief interest was not in rules, but in righteousness; not in institutions, but in men. Thus he violated again and again the Pharisaic rules of the Sabbath by his healings on that day. The Pharisees themselves were present on one such occasion (Mark 3. 1-5). There had been brought him a man with a withered hand. In one of the old Gospels, not contained in our Bible, the Gospel of the Hebrews, the man is said to have spoken thus to Jesus: "I was a mason, earning my living with my hands; I pray thee, Jesus, restore to me my health that I be not put to the shame of begging." Jesus read the thought of his enemies, and made his appeal to them. He tried to show them by his question just what their position meant: "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good?" It seemed so clear to him, surely they must

understand. But they refused to yield, all the more enraged because they could not answer him.

The Sabbath for Man.—Jesus made his position still more clear on another occasion. The disciples, passing through a grain field on the Sabbath, had plucked some of the ears, rubbed out the grain, and eaten it (Mark 2. 23-28). The Pharisees complained to Jesus. Taking the grain to appease hunger was allowed by the Law, but in doing it on the Sabbath the disciples had performed two of the thirty-nine principal labors forbidden by the rules of the scribes, namely, reaping and threshing. Jesus first answered them on their own plane, pointing to David, who likewise broke a rule in his need, and to the priests, who break the rule of no labor that they may offer sacrifices (Matt. 12. 3-5). Then he set forth the great principle which applies not only to the Sabbath, but to all laws and forms and institutions: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath;" to which should be added the word in Matthew 12. 7: "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

The Laws of Purity.—Even more extensive than the Sabbath laws were the laws of purity. These were based upon Leviticus 11 to 15 and Numbers 19, but endlessly elaborated. Holiness was largely a matter of keeping free from defilement by the unclean, that is, the ceremonially unclean food or objects or persons. Men forgot righteousness and mercy in their concern about bathing hands and vessels and shunning "unclean" food and "unholy" men. Here too Jesus came into conflict with the Pharisees, for about all these things he cared very little. The ceremonial washings he and his disciples simply left to one side (Mark 7. 1-5). He seems to have disregarded the laws of food, whether those of the scribes or those in Leviticus, declaring that it was not the food from without, but the thoughts within, that made a man clean or unclean (Mark 7. 14-23). He cared little whether men were ceremonially clean or not when it came to saving them. He was quite as ready to sit at table with Levi as with Simon the Pharisee.

The Conflicting Conception of Religion.—But the difference between Jesus and the Pharisees was far more than the question of obeying certain rules. It was a difference in the conception of religion itself. Long before this the great prophets had waged a similar fight against the popular religion of their day with its emphasis upon sacrifices and feasts and ritual. It is justice and kindness and humble obedience that Jehovah wants, they declared (Isa. 1 and Mic. 6). Jesus stands with the prophets for the religion of spirit and life, not of forms and rules. It is one of these prophets that he quotes: "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice" (Hos. 6. 6). The Pharisees saw only gradually how fundamentally he was opposed to them, but Jesus realized the difference. That appears in Mark 2. 18-22. Mark tells here how the Pharisees were criticizing the disciples because they did not keep certain rules, in this case the rules of fasting. Jesus points out that fasting is a form, and men should use forms only when they express the spirit. In this case fasting was out of place. "Can the sons of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?" Then, in picture language, he sets forth a still deeper lesson. The wedding feast was a common picture with the Jews to portray the blessings of the new age of the Messiah. I have brought the new, says Jesus, and you cannot shut it up any more in the old forms. You cannot patch the old garments with the new cloth, you cannot put the new wine into old wine-skins. Jesus was bringing the new religion of the Spirit and the old religion of letter and form, of ritual and rule, must pass away.

The Results of the Conflict.—With all this difference, Jesus still made his appeal to the scribes and Pharisees. His spirit of love and hope went out even to them and he sorrows when they do not respond (Mark 3. 4, 5). They were not all alike; it was a scribe to whom Jesus said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark 12. 34). But as a class they rejected him. Jesus accuses them of willful blindness because they said he had an unclean spirit and was in league with Beelzebub. It was not the wrong to him that mattered, but the sin against

themselves, against the light that was in them. That was the sin against the Holy Spirit, for the light was God's light (Mark 3. 22-30). Their attitude compelled him to take his stand openly and denounce them (Mark 7. 6-13). They in turn soon came to see that his victory would mean their defeat and loss of place. They tried to confute Jesus before the people (Matt. 12. 10) and so destroy his influence, but his answers left them speechless. And so they began plotting with the Herodians, probably followers of Herod Antipas (Mark 3. 6), apparently with the plan of showing up Jesus as a dangerous political character, perhaps a revolutionary. They did not succeed in Galilee, but upon just such a charge they at last secured his condemnation before Pilate (Luke 23. 2).

Directions for Study

Read Mark 1. 45; 6. 30-34, 53-56, and recall other passages which speak of the crowds that thronged about Jesus.

Read Luke 4. 21-30; Mark 3. 20, 21, 31-35.

Read Mark 2. 18-28; 3. 1-6, 20-35; 7. 1-23.

Study these passages under three heads as arranged above: the early popularity, the misunderstanding and opposition of friends, the enmity of the leaders.

The last point is the most important. After reading this chapter through, go back to the Scripture passages again. Try to discover for yourself the fundamental difference between Jesus and the Pharisees in their idea of religion, in their spirit, and in their aim.

What is your conception of religion?

CHAPTER XII

BEYOND THE BORDERS OF ISRAEL

We come now to the great turning point in the work of Jesus. The ministry in Galilee reaches its close. Jesus comes back again to the familiar places, but the old ways are not resumed. Nor does Jesus begin elsewhere a ministry like this. What were the real results of this ministry, and what was the meaning of Jesus' journey "Beyond the Borders of Israel"?

The Results of the Galilæan Ministry

The People Fail Jesus.—What had Jesus accomplished in this period? We have already seen his failure to win the leaders. That might not have counted so much if he had really won the people, but the real failure came here. In part the people were probably influenced by their leaders, but there was a deeper reason. We have already seen that the religion of the Jews at this time was a religion of law on the one side and of hope on the other. The Pharisees were concerned with the former, the interest of the people lay in the latter, in the dream of deliverance from Rome and an earthly kingdom. Jesus had alienated the Pharisees by his attitude toward the Law; now he alienated the people because he did not meet their ideal of the Kingdom hope. His first healings had aroused their enthusiasm, but he refused to work signs for them or to become a mere healer. He said nothing about revolt from Rome nor the future glories of Israel. Instead, he put more and more clearly his message about sin and repentance, about the kingdom of righteousness and love.

The Woes upon the Cities.—Jesus had been under no illusion as to the meaning of the crowds and their enthu-

siasm. That did not lessen his grief at their refusal or his condemnation of their lack of faith. We see his estimate of the results in the woes that he pronounces upon the three cities where most of his work was done: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. . . . And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Matt. 11. 21, 23, 24). Men are to be judged according to their light. Never had such a message come to any people. If the Queen of Sheba came from the ends of the earth to hear the wise king, what of this people that would not listen to a greater than Solomon? They were worse than the pagan Ninevites, for these repented at the prophet's preaching, and a greater than Jonah was here (Luke 11. 29-32).

Where Jesus Succeeded.—And yet the ministry in Galilee was not a failure. The people as a whole had rejected him, but there was a little group that had heard and rejoiced and obeyed. Twelve men he had found in these days upon whom he expected to build. And there were not a few others. The wise and the mighty had refused him, but the publicans and sinners, the poor and humble had turned to him, and his heart had been stirred again and again by their faith and eager desire. It was not what he had expected, but now he saw that it was his Father's good will, and he rejoiced in his Father's wisdom and mercy. That is what lies back of those words of wonder and rejoicing and gracious invitation, perhaps the most beautiful words in the Gospels, which come out of this very hour of darkness: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight." And then the wonder gives place to humble joy and eager longing, joy

that such a ministry is his, longing that all sinful and needy men may have its blessing: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal *him*. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11. 25-30).

The Crisis and the Departure

The Open Break With the Pharisees.—The opposition of the Pharisees came at length to a crisis. It was Jesus' own act that brought the final break. They had criticized his disciples for eating with unwashed (ceremonially unclean) hands. Jesus not only corrected their teaching, but openly and by name condemned them. He called them hypocrites, that is, men who were playing a part like the actors with their masks on the Greek stage. There was no real devotion to God with all their ostentatious piety. They seemed the strictest of saints, but he showed how by their rules they were nullifying the laws of God (Mark 7. 5-13). It was a definite break. The young teacher had defied and denounced the powerful leaders of the church. Even his disciples were astonished. "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended?" they said to him, as soon as they were alone (Matt. 15. 12). "Offended" was a mild word to describe the anger which the Pharisees felt. They had tried earlier to confute Jesus before the people and his answers had left them speechless (Matt. 12. 9-14). Now he denounced them before the people and they had no answer. It was no longer a mere debate about some law or rule; they saw at length that his teaching meant the overthrow of all for which they stood, and his success their loss of place and power. Mark tells us in another place (3. 6) that they began plotting with the Herodians, probably a political party and adherents of Herod Antipas.

Their plan may have been to attack Jesus as a dangerous political revolutionary, and so secure the help of this ruler who had so recently executed John the Baptist. They did not succeed at this time, but it was upon such a charge that they haled him at last before Pontius Pilate and brought him to the cross (Luke 23. 2).

Leaving Galilee.—Jesus thus decides to leave Galilee. The failure of the people and the danger from Herod may have moved him equally. He did not go through fear. That is plain from his response to a later warning as to peril from Herod: "Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third *day* I am perfected. Nevertheless I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the *day* following" (Luke 13. 31-33). His life was in God's care and he had no fear, but his work was not yet done. To be reckless of danger was not a sign of faith; it was simply tempting God (Matt. 4. 5-7).

The Wanderings

The Second Period of His Work.—The second period of Jesus' work, which now begins, bears four marks: (1) It is a time of wandering, most of it outside of Galilee, some beyond the borders of Israel. (2) In this time Jesus turns from the masses to give his special attention to the training of a smaller circle of disciples. (3) He wins the confession of that circle, and declares definitely his Messiahship. (4) He sees suffering and death as his end and prepares the disciples for it.

Where Jesus Went.—Very little is known of this period in which Jesus wandered beyond the bounds of his own people. As near as we can tell, he journeyed from Galilee northwestward to the regions bordering upon Tyre and Sidon, and upon his return kept on the east side of the lake coming down to Decapolis (Mark 7. 24, 31). A second journey to the north led him to Cæsarea Philippi, where Peter made the great confession and whence he returned again for at least a brief visit to Galilee and Capernaum (Mark 8. 27; 9. 30, 33).

Jesus and the Gentile Woman.—Only one incident is preserved for us from this first northern journey—that of the Syrophœnician woman. Jesus had gone north, not to continue his public ministry among other peoples, but for a period of retirement with his disciples. His fame, however, had reached even here. Some one who had gone up to Galilee from this region probably recognized him. Thus it happened that a certain woman came to the house where he was staying and besought him to cast a demon out of her daughter. According to Matthew, Jesus answered her that he was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. When she persisted, he added, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs" (Matt. 15. 26). All this at first sight seems strangely at variance with Jesus' usual quick sympathy and readiness to help. It must be remembered that Jesus was seeking retirement with his disciples; to begin the work of healing would at once bring the multitudes. Moreover, words tell but little oftentimes. Were the words playfully spoken? Or was he testing her faith? Two facts, in any case, are plain: the woman was encouraged to persist, and Jesus healed her child (Mark 7. 24-30).

Jesus and the Gentiles

Was It a Mission to the Gentiles?—All this, however, raises a deeper and more important question. What was Jesus' attitude toward the Gentiles? The Jews had failed him; was he turning now to the Gentiles? Did he hold that the Gentiles had an equal right to the Kingdom? Or did he still share something of the feeling of his own people, that the Kingdom and its blessings were for the Jew? It is clear that he undertook no mission to the Gentiles at this time. He had told the woman that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and when he had sent out his disciples it was with the instruction not to enter Samaritan or Gentile villages.

Jesus' Method.—There are two questions to be distinguished here: (1) Did Jesus include the Gentiles with

the Jews in his plans and message? (2) What was Jesus' method of carrying out this plan? Let us look at the latter first. Jesus was preparing men for the coming of the Kingdom. That meant a great deal more than to go out and make an announcement, to preach a sermon and then pass on, though this idea of "evangelizing the world" has been in the minds of some of his followers. He knew the work that it required to make men see the meaning of the Kingdom and to turn them to repentance. There was only one place to begin: with Israel, whom God had prepared for this message. If Israel refused, what encouragement was there to go to their Gentile neighbors, whose religion was a mass of superstition, whose lives were on the lowest plane? What, then, was Jesus' plan when the people of Galilee failed him? It was twofold. Ultimately he planned to make his appeal to Jerusalem. That was necessary, though he expected little from it. His real plan, however, was the training of a smaller group through whom his work might be done. The kingdom of heaven was like the leaven; it must spread quietly, working within. And the leaven was not to be the Jewish people as a whole, but this little group of his disciples. The method of Jesus, then, was the training of this little group. It was not time yet to preach to the Gentiles, and it was to be their task, and not his.

Jesus and the Jewish Attitude.—We turn now to the other question: Did Jesus include Gentiles with Jews in his thought of the Kingdom? The Jewish position we know. The Gentiles were enemies to be overthrown; or, as subject peoples, they were to bring tribute to Jerusalem. The kingdom of God meant the triumph of Israel; the Gentiles were the obstacle. First, we must note that it was against this idea of the Kingdom that Jesus fought all his life. It was not Gentile enemies that he was concerned about. He would not let himself be entrapped in any anti-Roman campaign (Mark 12. 13-17). The strong man whom he had overcome was not Rome, but the power of evil (Luke 11. 20-22).

His Message Is to Men as Men.—In the second place, in

all Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom there is no room for favor for Jews as Jews or discrimination against Gentiles as such. Jesus' preaching is not to Jews or to Gentiles, but to men as men. The old barriers of race and language and national hatred all drop away in his message. See what he asks of men: humility, penitence, earnestness, trust. There is not a word of anything Jewish, of circumcision, or washings, or holy days; any Gentile could render this just as well as a Jew. Note what he sets forth as the object of trust and ground of hope: not the Jehovah of Israel who delivered them from Egypt, but that Father God whom all men might know, who made his sun to shine upon the evil and the good (Matt. 5. 44, 45). The kingdom of Jesus is not a kingdom of the Jews. It is a kingdom of men, men with the spirit of mercy which makes them true children of such a Father of mercy.

His Treatment of Gentiles.—All this is exemplified in Jesus' treatment of individual Gentiles, whom he had abundant opportunity to meet, since Galilee was so largely Gentile. There is no narrowness here. He rejoices over the faith of the Roman centurion, as over that of the Syrophœnician woman (Matt. 8. 10). The Samaritans were scorned by the Jews almost more than were the pure Gentiles; yet Jesus holds up for praise the Samaritan leper in contrast with the rest of the ten who were presumably Jews. More striking still is the parable of the man that was a neighbor, where Jesus took a Samaritan for his hero and made "good Samaritan" forever a term of praise (Luke 10. 30-37). Again and again he condemned the Jews in contrast with Gentiles who were more ready for the word of God. Thus he spoke of the Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba, of Naaman and the widow of Sarepta, and compared Tyre and Sidon and Sodom, names that were very bywords for iniquity, with proud Capernaum and Bethsaida and Chorazin.

A Summary.—We may sum up by saying: Jesus did not turn from Israel to begin a work among the Gentiles; but neither did he show any of the Jewish narrowness and race hatred. His religion is human, and not national. He

rejoiced in love and faith wherever he found it. His kingdom was not a kingdom for Jews, but for the humble and contrite and merciful. As his ministry drew to a close he saw with increasing clearness that the Jews as a nation would refuse him, while the Gentiles came into the Kingdom.

Directions for Study

Read Matthew 11. 20-30; Luke 11. 29-32; Mark 7. 5-13; John 6. 66-68. These passages suggest the success and failure of the early ministry in Galilee.

Read Mark 7. 24-31. This passage, with the scattered references in the narrative, raises the question of Jesus' relation to the Gentiles.

Read the Scripture passages first; then read the narrative with constant reference to the Scripture, including the additional passages cited.

Try to gain for yourself a clear idea on two points: (1) Looking backward, what were the results of this early ministry? (2) Looking forward, what was Jesus' attitude toward those outside of Israel, and how did he plan to bring the good news of the Kingdom to them?

Discuss the character of Christianity as a universal religion, one suited to all nations and all men.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GREAT CONFESSION

The great central event in Jesus' ministry is given by Matthew in eight brief verses, in Mark and Luke by but three. So simply is the story told that it is easy to overlook its importance. But that is the character of our Gospels; they tell their wonderful tale without exclamation or comment, letting the deeds and words of Jesus speak for themselves. Their story has been far better than if they had mingled their own opinions and comments; but it needs the more thought and study on our part that we do not miss its meaning. The culmination of Jesus' ministry was the confession of his Messiahship by the disciples. How that confession came and what it meant forms the theme of this chapter.

How the Confession Came

The Lesson without Words.—We have already considered the plan of Jesus' work, and why he began with a ministry of teaching and did not announce his Messiahship at once. To have done the latter would have been to defeat his own purpose and stir to a flame the fires of religious patriotism and fanaticism that were always smoldering. To his hearers the kingdom of God meant Israel's rule and triumph, and the Messiah a leader against Rome. Jesus must first teach them what God's rule was, what the Kingdom really meant, and prepare their hearts for this. What he failed to do with the people as a whole he tried the more earnestly to accomplish with the smaller group of his disciples who should later leaven the whole lump.

But there was a second lesson that he had to teach the

twelve, and that concerned himself. The kingdom of God was not simply a beautiful idea; it was the reign of God that was to be established, and Jesus was to found it. Men must learn to trust him, to obey him, to serve him. He had been silent about himself. Even after this time he did not say much about himself. But that was not because he himself had no place in his gospel or in his kingdom; it was because he wanted no outward allegiance. Here was his first goal in the training of the twelve: he wants their confession of his Messiahship, not because he has proclaimed it, but because they have seen it in him. That was why he was spending these weeks or months in quiet with them wandering far from home.

What Do Men Say?—Thus the time came to test his work by its fruits. It was on the second journey to the north. The city of Cæsarea Philippi lay by a far-famed spring. To this region the company had come, traveling north from Decapolis along the east side of the lake and Jordan. The city itself Jesus had apparently avoided, stopping rather in the quiet villages where they were less likely to be disturbed. "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" was his first question. They told him what men had been saying about him. Some had taken him for John the Baptist come to life again, as Herod Antipas had (Matt. 14. 2). The saying shows how profound the impression was that John the Baptist had made. Some held him to be Elijah, whom the Jews expected to appear before the Messiah's coming (Mal. 4. 5; note Matt. 11. 14). Others simply said that he was one of the prophets, either a new prophet or one of the old ones risen again. These opinions all agreed in one point: Jesus was a prophet. This had been the very first impression that he had made upon the people (Mark 1. 22), and it was as such that the disciples remembered him in the first hopeless days after his death, when they described him as "a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people" (Luke 24. 19).

What Say Ye?—Here at last was the test, and Jesus applied it under conditions that made it the more severe.

These men had seen him popular, thronged by acclaiming multitudes; now he was a wanderer, his very life in peril. Nothing could have been in sharper contrast with all that was popularly associated with the name of Messiah; the Messiah was to lead the nation and to have honor; the Messiah was to have power and to overwhelm his foes. This was just their friend, in whose company they had walked and talked, had hungered and eaten, had toiled and slept, in these past months. Jesus had wrought great deeds in those days, but none of them compares with this victory in far-off Cæsarea Philippi. This lonely fugitive wins from these companions of his lowly life the highest word which they as Jews could speak. They saw in him all that the prophets had looked forward to, all that their nation had longed and prayed for through the years, the Messiah of Jehovah.

The Confession.—It was Peter who spoke the word, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Whether he spoke the common thought of all the twelve we do not know. It is probable that Jesus' word about Peter was exemplified even then; that the faith of the others rested upon this rock apostle, and that, now that he had spoken, they joined in his confession. There is a quiet, even solemn, joy and triumph in the answer of Jesus: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter [Rock], and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

The Church and Its Foundation

A Subject of Controversy.—What did Jesus mean here by church, and how is Peter the rock upon which his church is founded? Endless controversy has raged around this passage. Upon it, together with the passage John 21. 15-17, the Roman Catholic Church has based its doctrine of the papacy. Rome declares that Peter was here given supreme authority in the church as the vicar of Christ,

and that the bishops of Rome, as popes, succeeded Peter in this place and authority, Peter being accounted the first bishop of Rome. There are three questions that need to be asked here:

(1) What is the church?

(2) What is the rock upon which it rests?

(3) What is meant by the "keys of the kingdom" and the binding and loosing?

The Church a Fellowship.—What does Jesus mean by his church here? When the word "church" is used to-day, we are apt to think of a more or less elaborate organization. With the Roman Catholic this is especially true. For him this machinery of priest and bishop and other clergy, ending at last in the pope and summed up in him, forms the actual church. Yet words often begin with a very simple significance and gather a large and complex meaning in the course of the centuries. Thus it has been with the idea of the church. If we ask what this word meant with Jesus and his first followers, we must drop all ideas of elaborate organization, of priesthood and authority. It was simply the company of his followers of which Jesus was here speaking, the new community joined to him in loyalty and trust. Such the church was in the first days after his death, and so it appears in the letters of Paul. It would be better if we had some such word as fellowship, or communion, with which to translate it. Think how much strife about organization and authority would be eliminated if we read, "Upon this rock will I build my community (the new fellowship)."

The Significance of Its Founding.—In rejecting the wrong interpretation, we must be careful not to miss the great meaning of this hour. Up to this time religion had always been a matter of a given city, or people, or nation. A man held a particular religion because he was a Jew or an Athenian. With all their proselytism, the Jews did not think of this matter differently from others; the man who fully accepted their faith became a Jew in so doing. With Jesus the national passes away; he had no Jewish kingdom in mind, nor the rule of any nation. He sees

a company gathered from many sources, those who confess and follow him as the one sent of God to establish his rule upon the earth. An inner spirit and a common faith are to join them in a vital unity. Nothing shall overcome them, neither plotting Pharisees nor Jerusalem priests, nor Herod Antipas nor Pontius Pilate, nor any power on earth or under the earth.

Peter the Foundation.—What, then, is this "rock" upon which the church rests? In avoiding the error of the Roman Catholic Church we must not run into an opposing extreme. The passage is plain: "Thou art Rock [Greek, *petros*], and upon this rock [*petra*] I will build my church." Protestants have sometimes said that Jesus did not mean Peter, but only Peter's faith, his confession of Jesus as Messiah. No, it was not Peter's creed on the one hand on which the church was to rest, nor Peter's office on the other hand as bishop of Rome, according to the Roman Catholic fiction. It was Peter himself, this believing, confessing man. That was what Jesus had been waiting for, such a man as this. That was the whole meaning and purpose of his work with these disciples. The new fellowship of the Kingdom was to rest, not upon outward force or authority, not upon a scheme of organization, for he gave none such. Its foundation was to be men, men who knew him and trusted him, men of vision, men with his Spirit, men who would carry his message and gather new followers.

But Not Peter Alone.—In all this Peter, of course, was not alone. The honor that comes to him, which no one can take away, lies in this, that his confession was first. It was not a mere matter of that spirit of leadership which characterized him. It was a spiritual intuition, not from flesh and blood, but through the revelation of the Father. Others were joined to him as such foundation. To begin with, the real foundation and corner stone was Christ himself (1 Cor. 3. 11). Then we read that all the apostles form such foundation, and elsewhere it is said of the apostles and prophets (Rev. 21. 14; Eph. 2. 20). Indeed, in this new building of a divine humanity all Christ's

followers are stones; all rest upon the final foundation which is Christ, but all help in turn to make the building and to bear it up (1 Cor. 3. 9-16; Eph. 2. 19-22).

The Meaning of the Keys.—There is here one other word of Jesus likewise often misused: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Here again Jesus uses a striking figure of speech. Because such a figure admits of varying interpretations, it is important that we hold to the spirit and principles of Jesus' teaching as elsewhere clearly evident. Peter is not now the foundation, but the housekeeper, or steward. It is his to open and close the door. It is an utter perversion of Jesus' teaching, for which this furnishes no ground, to suppose that it means that Peter or anyone else should have the authority to determine who should enter the kingdom of God and who not. There is only one door that Jesus ever suggested, and that is the forgiving mercy of God; and he pointed out but one way to enter, and that was with the humble trust of little children. But it was the high privilege of Peter and the rest by their preaching to open the door of forgiveness to penitent men, and to show how that door closed to the unbelieving and disobedient. The figure of loosing and binding suggests a similar work of teaching. These were familiar phrases with the rabbis, referring to their authority to determine what was allowed according to the law and what was forbidden. It surely does not need to be said that under a figure of speech Jesus was not introducing that system of rules and laws against which he had been fighting. And yet they were to be scribes as teachers of the Kingdom. There is another passage in which Jesus combines the ideas of scribe and householder (the latter suggested here by the keys): "Every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. 13. 52). As teachers of the Kingdom they were to open the way of truth and shut the way of evil. And they were to do this

not alone, but under divine guidance; thus it should represent the will of heaven.

Here again it is clear that Jesus is not speaking of an office with outward authority, or even limiting this to one man; for in Matthew 18. 18 he gives this same authority to all the disciples. It belongs, therefore, to men as the disciples of Christ and not as officials. All this corresponds with the faith of the early church as we find it reflected in Paul's epistles. Every disciple as such was to have the Spirit, and what he said was with authority so far as he really possessed that Spirit. The early church, as seen in the New Testament, nowhere shows that elaborate organization or autocratic power which Rome later built upon these verses.

Directions for Study

Read Matthew 16. 13-20.

By means of a map follow the course of Jesus and his company on their northern journey.

This chapter has to do with the disciples and their training. From this point of view, review from Chapter VII on, especially Chapter X, forming a picture of the life of the twelve with the Master. Try to realize what his teaching, his works, and his fellowship meant to them.

In the study of this chapter consider these two questions: (1) By what steps, or through what influences, were the disciples brought to this confession? (2) What did this confession mean as the beginning of a new fellowship, the Christian Church?

What is it that makes a Christian Church? Has the church any right to *compel* belief or to *compel* obedience? What is the nature of her authority?

CHAPTER XIV

THE TRANSFIGURATION

The Gospels for the most part are the simple record of the words and deeds of Jesus, set down by the writers without notes or comment. Here and there, however, the curtain is lifted a little and we are shown, back of the words and deeds, the deeps of Jesus' own life, his feelings, his inner purposes, his conflicts. These may be called the autobiographical passages, for it is Jesus himself who thus lifts the curtain. At such places we stand reverently and seek to grasp in some slight measure the inner meaning of that great life, in particular to gain what light we can upon the question as to how Jesus thought of himself and his mission.

Here belongs Matthew 11. 25-30, that wonderful passage, half prayer and half invitation, where Jesus opens to the Father his heart of reverent joy and to men the depths of his tender mercy. But there are four other scenes of self-disclosure that are to be noted in particular, each marking a supreme experience in the life of the Master. Two we have already studied: the call and baptism of the Spirit, and the forty days in the wilderness. The transfiguration, which we are now to consider, is the third, and the scene in Gethsemane the last. The first two incidents were told by Jesus to his disciples; the report of the last two we owe to that inner circle of his friends, Peter, James, and John, who were with him on these last occasions. In all four scenes Jesus is concerned with the same great question, what his work was and how he should carry it out. All of them involve conflict and decision. They are the inner explanation of his outer life. He moves before men calm, strong, victorious, but back of that kingly life lay the

temptations and fierce conflicts through which the Son of man passed for the sake of the sons of men.

The Problem of the Suffering Messiah

The Meaning of the Transfiguration.—The transfiguration has commonly been conceived as a heavenly glorification of the Master intended to impress his disciples. It was, indeed, a part of their training, but that does not mark its deepest meaning. As already noted, this period in Jesus' life between the Galilæan ministry and the last Jerusalem days is marked by four facts: the wanderings, the special training of the disciples, the declaration of the messiahship, and the Master's recognition of his coming death. With the last the transfiguration experience is concerned. It was the culmination of a momentous experience in which the final battle was fought and the strength was gained for Jerusalem and death.

The Decision to Go to Jerusalem.—The first fact that meets us here is Jesus' decision to go to Jerusalem. To his disciples it was utterly astonishing. They knew the situation and had no doubt talked it all over among themselves. They had had to flee Galilee because of peril to Jesus' life, when the Pharisees had united with the Herodians in their plottings. Apparently they had returned to their old quarters in Capernaum but once since that time, and then only for the briefest stay (Mark 9. 30; Matt. 17. 24). But if Galilee was dangerous, Jerusalem was far more so. The Pharisees were far stronger there than in Galilee, while the powerful priestly party would have even more reason for opposition. If Galilee spelled danger, Jerusalem meant certain death.

God's Will for His Life.—Why did Jesus determine to go? The first and principal reason was that he saw that it was the will of his Father. Through all these days he had been following the guidance of that Spirit that had been with him in boyhood and had filled him with a fuller baptism there at the Jordan. His one passion had been to do his Father's will, his one confidence had been his Father's

care. He had entered the doors of service which his Father had opened. Now these were closed. In Galilee the multitudes who had once listened and rejoiced were turning away, while his enemies conspired. To go to Gentile lands would be in effect to give up his mission; it was one thing to help individual Gentiles here and there as he met them, but the Kingdom could not be built upon such foundations. The message must go to his own people first. But that meant not merely Galilee; one could more easily think of France apart from Paris than of the Jewish people of that day apart from Jerusalem. Here was the work for which he had come. As to what lay at the end of that road, that belonged to his Father. If Jerusalem meant suffering and death, then death was a part of his Father's will and purpose.

Facing the Question of Death.—Thus Jesus was brought face to face with the question of his death. We do not know how early he had begun to consider this issue of his work as possible or necessary. It would seem that he had considered it from the beginning. It was present in the wilderness days. There he had seen that his way was not to be that of outer rule and triumph, but of humble obedience and service. As he himself put it later on, "The Son of man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister." There too in the temptation of hunger he faced the question as to what he should do if his life were in danger, and the clear answer was that he was to do his Father's will and trust him. That way of service and obedience and trust he had been following ever since. The farther he went, the more clear the end appeared. He spoke to his disciples of the day when the bridegroom should be taken away. The close of John the Baptist's life stirred him deeply, and he saw in its tragic end the suggestion of what was coming to him (Matt. 17. 10-13). His mind reverted to the great figures of the past, the prophets who had brought Jehovah's word to his people. And the people, he knew, had not changed. Would not the sons of those that slew the prophets do the same with him (Matt. 23. 29-36)? These scattered utterances of Jesus are indica-

tions of how his mind had long been occupied with this question.

The Insight of the Master.—Nowhere do the spiritual insight and the independence of Jesus seem more wonderful than here. For Jewish thought, the idea of a suffering Messiah, defeated and dying, if it had ever been suggested, would have been the height of absurdity or even blasphemy. So, indeed, it seemed to them later in the Christian preaching—"unto Jews a stumblingblock." The passage in Isaiah 52. 13 to 53. 12 about the suffering servant had not been connected by them with the Messiah. With all the instruction of Jesus, the disciples had no thought of anything like this. But Jesus, from the moment that he confessed himself as Messiah, began to teach them "that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed" (Mark 8. 31, 32). His death was to accomplish what his life could not do. It was not simply something strange and terrible which obedience to his Father demanded; it was to be for the saving of the people. He was to "give his life a ransom for many."

Jesus' Use of Messianic Scriptures.—This same insight of Jesus is seen in his use of Scripture at this time. It was natural that he should seek light upon his path in the sacred writings, just as he did at his temptation. There were many passages in the Old Testament which the rabbis had fixed upon as Messianic. Some of these spoke of the Messiah's power and glory and his vengeance upon the nations. Such, for example, was the second psalm, held by all as Messianic, where it is written:

> **"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;**
> **Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."**

And again, to the nations:

> **"Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way,**
> **For his wrath will soon be kindled."**

Nowhere does Jesus betray the influence of such passages. He passed them by and turned to the one from Isaiah (52.

13 to 53. 12) noted above, which the rabbis had not thought of as Messianic. In this great passage Jesus read the meaning of his life and the presage of its end. Its influence appears in two ideas that come out again and again in his teaching at this time. The first is the idea of service: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mark 10. 45). "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth" (Luke 22. 27). The second is the idea of sacrifice and suffering, even unto death. "If any man would come after me," he says solemnly after the rebuke of Peter, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." These two thoughts he applies to others also. There is a third, taken also from Isaiah 52 and 53, which he applies only to himself, and which occurs in but one saying in this period. But though it could mean little to the disciples at this time, and so have little place in his teaching, we can see how much it meant to Jesus when he declared that he was to "give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10. 45). That thought changed his death from a tragedy to his last and greatest deed of service.

Upon the Mount

The Struggle.—The transfiguration experience comes in the midst of this struggle. Here and there the Gospels give us a glimpse of how intense the conflict was, though nowhere else is it seen so vividly as in Gethsemane. It was more than the shrinking from an awful death. It was the question of his work and, in the end, the question of his trust in the Father. He had been sent to establish the Kingdom; how should the work be done if his enemies thus triumphed? What would become of the little company that he had gathered, his beloved friends who were the first-fruits of the fellowship of the Kingdom? When they smote the shepherd, would not the sheep be scattered (Mark 14. 27)? Could this strange and terrible way indeed be the will of his Father?

The Victory.—Thus it comes that Jesus goes up into the mountain. He goes up to pray and he takes the three, not

that they may be impressed with some scene of glory, but that he may have their sympathy and fellowship in his hour of need, just as he craved it in that later hour in Gethsemane (Luke 9. 28). The prayer, as in Gethsemane, was not for a brief period, but was a long struggle. Even these three were little fitted to understand it, and soon they slept (Luke 9. 32). But the conflict issued in victory. Here too, as at the baptism, the Father spoke to him in clearest assurance. Even the disciples, when they awoke at length, could not but see the glory of heaven in their Master's face, and knew that this mountaintop was a Bethel. What was the assurance that Jesus received? We can judge of that by what followed. He begins again to instruct the disciples as to his end of suffering and death; he had received the assurance that the way to the cross was the way of his Father's will. But not only this: there was the further assurance that he should live again. These three things henceforth are joined together in his thought: Messiahship, suffering, and resurrection (Mark 9. 9; Luke 9. 22).

Preparing the Twelve

"The Son of Man Must Suffer."—There remained, then, the task of preparing the disciples for such an end. It was not an easy one. Jesus' acknowledgment that he was the Messiah had filled their minds with a tumult of exultation and high hopes. While Jesus was thinking of the hard road that lay before him they were dreaming of future glory and power. Now he must show them what Messiahship really meant. Mark tells us, in words that follow immediately upon Peter's confession, that "He began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." "Be it far from thee, Lord," said impulsive Peter; "this shall never be unto thee." Deeply stirred, Jesus answers. There is a passion and a severity in his words that can be understood only when we realize the struggle through which he has been passing. Here is the same temptation

to save himself. The same tempter is speaking whom he met in the wilderness, and who sought then, as now, to turn his way aside from God's will. "Get thee behind me, Satan," he cries out to Peter, the rock apostle whom he has just praised; "for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men" (Mark 8. 33). He himself was deeply conscious at the moment how widely God's ways differed from the thoughts of man.

"They Understood Not This Saying."—Luke tells us that the transfiguration occurred a week after the confession at Cæsarea Philippi (9. 28). After the transfiguration Jesus begins again to speak of his suffering and death and resurrection and continues the instruction as they go upon their way (Mark 9. 9-13, 30-37). It was still beyond their comprehension. What was this resurrection? Was not Elijah to come first; how, then, could the Messiah appear when Elijah had not come? This last question they brought to Jesus. If men only knew it, Jesus answered, Elijah is come already. And if you could but understand, you would see that as they treated John (this Elijah) so would they also treat the Son of man. There is a pathos in this gulf that separates the disciples just at this time from the mind of the Master. These were the days when he most needed their sympathy and comprehension. At the same time, realizing how short a time he would be with them, he felt just at this time most urgently the need of making them see this meaning of the sacrificial life and of his death. But their minds were obsessed with the old ideas of kingdom and rule. Their Master was the Messiah, what should they be when he came into his kingdom? By themselves on the way they argued the question as to who was entitled to first place (Mark 9. 34). Luke piles up his phrases to indicate how little they comprehended of what Jesus was telling them about himself: "But they understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask him about this saying" (Luke 9. 45).

Later Movements.—These last events occurred after they had left the north. The Gospels do not tell us where the

mount of transfiguration was. The traditional site is Tabor, but it was probably some height near Cæsarea Philippi instead. It would seem that after leaving this region in the north, Jesus made his last visit to Galilee, coming at length to the old quarters in Capernaum (Mark 9. 30). It was no time for him to take up his public work in Galilee again, and so he kept hid from the people. The multitudes had apparently lost their first eager interest and it was not hard to do.

Directions for Study

Read Mark 8. 31-38; 9. 1-13, 30-32. Compare with this Luke 9. 21-36, 43-45.

Recall briefly the incidents of the last two lessons: the departure from Galilee, the wanderings, the simple life that Jesus and his company lived together, and finally the confession.

Keeping the Scripture passages before you, read the narrative above and study the three main questions which it presents.

1. Consider the problem in Jesus' life: the way that pointed to Jerusalem, the prospect of suffering and death inseparable from that way, and the problem beneath all this of how the Messiah could suffer and die.

2. Consider in the light of all this why Jesus went up on the mount, and what happened there. It might as truly be called the mount of prayer as the mount of transfiguration. It would not have been the latter if it had not first been the former.

3. Consider the Master's task in preparing his disciples for the end and the wonderful patience that he showed. What are some great truths that mankind has been slow in learning?

How far is the spirit of sacrifice still the condition of leadership and of human progress? Why has Christianity made the cross its symbol?

In addition to Isaiah 52. 13 to 53. 12, read Isaiah 41. 8-11, 42. 1-7. These passages all deal with the "Servant of Jehovah." Jesus was specially attracted to this book. Recall his use of Isaiah 61. 1, 2.

CHAPTER XV

APPROACHING THE CROSS

Now the last journey begins. The little company turns toward Jerusalem. Whatever the disciples may have thought, the Master knew that they were approaching the cross. That fact of the nearing cross we must constantly keep in mind as we study this lesson. We look at Jesus in its light. The deep and tender sympathy is still there, but there is a sterner note as he speaks about what discipleship means. We gain a new picture of Jesus himself as he thus enters the shadow of the cross, a new vision of his determination and courage. And the disciples too are revealed to us more clearly. How do they meet the test and what kind of men does it show them to be? With their usual frankness the Gospels show us the darker and the brighter side of these men.

The Test of the Cross

The Steadfast Face.—It is to the Master that we turn first. How does he appear now that the bright days are behind him and each step bears him nearer to the great trial? The few words of the Gospels are like the simple, strong strokes of a master painter, setting the scene perfectly before us. "And it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9. 51). "And they were on the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them: and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid" (Mark 10. 32). We see it all as we read these words: the Master no longer in the group, but going on before, with a steadfast purpose and a spirit resting upon him that awed his followers; the disciples following, amazed, afraid, and yet remaining with him.

The Confident Christ.—There is one word of Jesus, probably coming at the beginning of this journey, that shows his spirit in this hour. It was perhaps during the last hasty visit to Galilee that a few Pharisees, who may have been friendly to him, brought him word that Herod Antipas was waiting to seize him. Jesus' answer shows his scorn for the weak and crafty king, his clear realization of what his final lot was to be, but beneath all this a deep confidence in the Father who was ordering his life. He sees clearly enough the enemies and the cross, but they only mean the perfecting of his work according to God's plan. "Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third *day* I am perfected. Nevertheless I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the *day* following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Luke 13. 31-33).

The Disciples Follow.—And how did the disciples meet the test of the approaching cross? They had joined him in those brighter days of Galilee. They had not forsaken him when the multitudes turned away. They were with him in his wanderings, and had believed on him as Messiah in the hour of his loneliness and danger. Would they stand this hardest test when he told them of his coming death? Would they go with him when he turned to Jerusalem? They could not realize the full meaning of his warnings, but they did know that Jerusalem was the very citadel of their Master's foes. And yet they followed him. Peter and the rest might protest, but they had no thought of leaving their Lord. It was this that stirred the heart of Jesus, and moved him to say at a later time, "Ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations" (Luke 22. 28). It was another instance of his wonderful power over them and, despite their faults, there lay in this loyalty the promise of their future service.

Lessons by the Way

The Disciples Still Learning.—The Gospels show us the loyalty of the disciples, but they show us also how much

they had yet to learn. The shadow of the cross which brings out the courage and devotion of the Master only serves to throw into sharper relief their petty quarrels and ambitions. The journey was just another stage in their instruction. Looking back to these days after their Lord's death and resurrection, the disciples must often have wondered at their own blindness and sorrowed at their littleness. And this may be the reason why they preserved for us so many incidents that bring out these facts. That they should have handed down these stories that reflect so upon themselves seems like a form of penance on their part.

The Lesson of Service.—The first of these incidents occurred apparently just before they left Galilee (Mark 9. 33-37). It was probably not very long after the acknowledgment by Jesus of his Messiahship. While his thoughts were burdened with future danger and trial, theirs were filled with dreams of future glory. What should be the rank of each in the coming kingdom? Who should be first? It may be that the favor shown to the three whom Jesus took to the mount had occasioned the controversy. Jesus did not chide them for being ambitious; it was not stupid and satisfied men that he wanted. The fault lay in having wrong ambitions. The first place in my kingdom, he says, means service, and not rule. He had placed a little child in the midst; now he took the child into his arms. It was a simple act of lovingkindness to some unknown child of the street. Then he added: To receive some poor one like this little child, that is to receive me, and not only me, but the Father that sent me.

The Rebuke of Narrowness.—"Teacher," said John, "we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him because he followed not us." Here was the same spirit again. Jesus' kingdom meant to them position and preferment. Here was a man taking Jesus' name who had not been regularly admitted to their circle. He might be claiming a place with them some day. How often this spirit has appeared among Christ's followers since then, men to whom office in the church means authority and

rights which others must respect. My kingdom, says Jesus to John, means service. He who serves belongs to us, and we have nothing to fear of such. And no matter how humble the service that is done in my spirit, it shall not fail of its reward (Mark 9. 38-41).

The Inhospitable Samaritans.—The brothers James and John figure in two other incidents of this period. The first occurred in Samaria. Jesus had planned to stop at a certain village and had sent messengers ahead to arrange for the entertainment of his company. The bitter prejudice which the Jews held against the Samaritans was matched by that of the Samaritans toward the Jews. When they saw that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem they would not receive him. The disciples were indignant. James and John recalled the story of Elijah calling down fire from heaven to destroy his foes and they proposed this at once. Here was the same difference again: they were thinking of power, he of love; they of rule, and he of service. As some of the old manuscripts of the Gospel put it, "The Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9. 51-56, and note in margin).

The Sons of Zebedee.—Now the strife about the first place in the Kingdom comes up again (Mark 10. 35-45). The minds of the disciples had not grasped even yet what was the meaning of the Kingdom, or what this journey to Jerusalem signified. Of course they did not doubt the word of Jesus when he told them of his suffering and death; but he had spoken many strange sayings, and this was like some others which they had not understood. Whatever it meant, one thing was certain in their minds: their Master was the Messiah and he was coming into his kingdom. So the strife went on. They had been ashamed to have Jesus know of this contention, but now James and John took the matter into their own hands (perhaps with their mother; see Matt. 20. 20) and came to Jesus asking him for the first places in his kingdom.

The Cost of Power.—And so Jesus takes up again the question of authority and power. They are asking for places of power; are they ready to pay the cost? Can they

drink his cup? Very lightly they both answer yes. They could not see it then, but they learned the lesson later. The cup of Jesus was the cup of pain and anguish of soul that he was soon to drink. The throne of power lay beyond. We see his power to-day, a power over men that was never so great as now. But we know, too, what Jesus knew even then, that the only road to his throne lay through Gethsemane and Golgotha. And then Jesus thought of what lay before James and John. They would prove true, he believed; in the end they would tread this same road of service and sacrifice upon which he had entered. They remembered his words and understood them later: "The cup that I drink ye shall drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: but to sit on my right hand or on my left hand is not mine to give."

The Nature of Power.—Then Jesus calls the twelve. What you are thinking of, he says, is the pagan conception, the idea of making people serve you. In my kingdom it is different. I am with you not as lord, but as servant, giving my life for men. Do you wish to be great? Then make yourself a servant. Does any one of you wish first place? Then let him be the servant of all. Power in my Kingdom is simply power to serve.

What Discipleship Demands

Would-Be Followers Refused.—A number of incidents of this last journey are concerned with Jesus' call or refusal of disciples. In them Jesus seems to set up new and more exacting standards. To understand the demands of Jesus we must remember two things: First, the question at issue is not whether these men are to believe in Jesus, but whether they are to join his company and go with him to Jerusalem. Second, the time of peril and testing is at hand; in his company there is room only for men of absolute devotion. These facts we must bear in mind when we read of the two whom Jesus refused (Luke 9. 57-62). One was a scribe, as we learn from Matthew's account (8. 19). Perhaps he thought of Jesus as a great rabbi from whom

he might learn. There was sterner business on hand, and Jesus made him feel it. "The foxes have holes," he told him, "and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Another said, "I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house." Jesus read the half-hearted purpose, and knew that there was not the stuff here to stand the test of the coming days. "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back," he declared, "is fit for the kingdom of God."

An Urgent Call.—That does not mean that Jesus did not care for more followers. On the contrary, this was the time when he wanted men of utter devotion to share in the great work that was coming. And so we read of two men whom he himself invited. One of these asked for permission first to bury his father (Luke 9. 59, 60). It seems a simple request and a mark of filial piety. But the fasting and ceremonies of such an occasion in that land involved days of time, and fitted ill with the urgency of Jesus' requirement. Leave those that are dead (spiritually) to bury their dead, said Jesus; but do thou publish the tidings of the Kingdom.

The Rich Young Ruler.—The other is the familiar instance of the rich young ruler (Mark 10. 17-31). The brief story gives us clearly his picture. Though young, he is a man of position, a synagogue ruler. He is a man of wealth. More than all this, he is a man of earnestness and enthusiasm. Despite wealth and standing, he runs to meet Jesus upon the way, kneels to him, calls him by the unusual name of Good Teacher, and asks him for something further that he may do to inherit eternal life. Such eager earnestness appealed to Jesus. It was men of this kind that he wanted at this hour. There was something personally engaging in the man. So Jesus began to question him. Have you kept the commandments? he asks. Significantly he specifies those of the second table, as the Jews were accustomed to divide them, the commandments that concerned a man's relations to his fellows. We need not question the honesty of the man when he answers,

"All these have I observed from my youth." Then Jesus said, "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me." To the young ruler it was a severe test, and Jesus had not asked this of others; but danger lay before, the end was near, and Jesus must have followers of absolute devotion. But if the demand was great, the privilege which Jesus offered was greater; it was an invitation to join the intimate circle of his personal friends. And the man refused. He had no doubt been sincere in his question and desire. He may have expected Jesus to ask him to give some large sum to the poor, or to build a synagogue. That would have enabled him to win a fine reputation for generosity and still to keep his wealth. He had done many fine things, he was ready to do more, but not ready to "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." And he went away sorrowful. So must Jesus also have done, who had looked upon him and loved him, and had coveted him for a great cause.

Concerning the Journey

The Route and the Company.—The Gospels give us no connected story of this last journey. We form our picture of it from a few items given here and there. As to the route that the party took, we have two suggestions. From Luke we learn that they passed through Samaria (Luke 9. 52). Mark and Matthew say that he came into the borders of Judæa beyond the Jordan (Mark 10. 1; Matt. 19. 1). It seems probable that both references are to this journey and that both are correct; it may well be that he started through Samaria and then crossed the Jordan, taking the rest of the journey along the route east of the river. There was quite a company with Jesus, a score at least, probably more. There were other disciples besides the twelve, among them women whom he had healed and certain other women. At least some of these were women of means, for they helped to defray the expenses of the journey (Luke 8. 1-3).

The Work on the Way.—The journey must have consumed some time. But though Jerusalem was Jesus' goal, there was still work by the way. He proclaimed the good news of the Kingdom as he went, and with more urgency because of the nearness of the end. The messengers whom he sent ahead probably not only arranged for the entertainment of the company, but prepared the people for Jesus' teaching. We learn that multitudes followed him, and that he healed as well as taught (Mark 10. 1; Matt. 19. 1, 2). But his chief concern was still the preparation of his disciples. For such instruction and for quiet fellowship the long road by which they traveled gave abundant opportunity. If the days of Galilee were wonderful for these disciples to look back upon, what must not have been these last weeks before the end?

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY

Read Luke 13. 31-33; Mark 9. 33-41; Luke 9. 51-62; Mark 10. 17-45.

Briefly recall the events since Jesus and his disciples gave up their work in Galilee, as we have studied them: the journey to the coasts of Sidon and Tyre; Jesus' meeting with the Gentiles in the person of the Syrophœnician woman; the training of the disciples in the quiet of retirement; the journey northward to Cæsarea Philippi; the great moment of the confession, and the word to Peter; the decision to go to Jerusalem; the night of prayer and transfiguration. Note how all this prepares for our study of to-day.

Read the chapter with constant reference to the Scripture passages. Try to get the following clearly before you:

1. A picture of Jesus and his company on the way: the Master earnest, determined; the disciples wondering and following behind.

2. The strife of the disciples, its cause, and the lessons with which Jesus tried to correct this.

3. Jesus' severe demands in these last days as shown (1) in the two disciples whom he refused, (2) in the case of the two whom he called.

4. A picture of the journey as a whole, its route, the number of followers, and what occupied Jesus upon the way.

Discuss the place of devotion (loyalty) as an element in character.

Discuss the need of decision as an element in success.

CHAPTER XVI

ENTERING JERUSALEM

As was noted in the last chapter, the probable route of this last journey led from Samaria across to the east of the Jordan, and then down through the district of Peræa. Then the road recrossed the Jordan about where the Israelites crossed of old. The journey from the Jordan to Jerusalem was not an easy one. For five to eight hours the road led across a waterless wilderness; and so it came that the road usually taken was by way of Jericho, the rich city surrounded with fields and gardens forming an oasis in the midst of this desert. Jesus had apparently planned his journey so as to be in Jerusalem during Passover week, the presence of the multitudes in the city at that time fitting in with his purpose. On the other hand, there was good reason why he should not reach the city earlier, lest he should be seized before his work was done. Thus Jericho afforded a convenient last stopping place. As the entrance to Jerusalem seems to have been made on the first day of the week, it is quite likely that Jesus spent the Sabbath (Saturday) in Jericho.

At Jericho

Zacchæus.—The route by Jericho was the one taken by pilgrims from Galilee and Peræa, and Jesus must have passed through this city many times when attending the great feasts at Jerusalem. He may have been here during the time of his public ministry as well, but there are only two incidents in the Gospels connected with Jericho, and both these occurred at this time. The first is the story of another man of wealth, though very unlike the young ruler.

The young ruler was a Jew of exemplary life and high standing: Zacchæus was one of the execrated class of publicans. He may have been at the head of the customs house in Jericho, as Levi apparently was in Capernaum. It would be a responsible position, as Jericho was a border city and important trade routes from the east and north passed through it. Or he may have been connected with the farming of the taxes. In any case he was a high official, a "chief publican," and very rich. The news of Jesus' coming had preceded him and throngs were awaiting his entrance. Zacchæus had evidently heard of this astonishing rabbi from the north who did not hesitate to associate with publicans like himself and he was determined to see him. There must have been more than mere curiosity, for, being short of stature and unable to see, he threw aside his dignity as a man of wealth and station, and climbed a tree. There Jesus saw him, read his eager interest, and invited himself and his company to be guests at Zacchæus' house. Here at the very doors of Jerusalem Jesus went in the face of all orthodox rule and custom. But he cared far less for criticism than for the chance of winning a man; for "the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." And he won the man. While the Jews criticized, Zacchæus, penitent and yet joyful, solemnly declared his purpose to Jesus: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold" (Luke 19. 1-10).

Bartimæus.—Zacchæus was a wealthy official and Bartimæus a poor blind wayside beggar. They were alike in one respect: both of them needed the help of Jesus and were earnest in seeking it. Bartimæus had no one to lead him to Jesus; all the people cared for was to stop his persistent crying out. The cry was enough to stop Jesus at once, and the faith of Bartimæus brought the answer: "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole" (Mark 10. 46-52). It is fitting that the record of Jesus' ministry outside of Jerusalem should close with these two deeds of mercy, for Bartimæus and Zacchæus represent the two

classes to whom his gracious service had gone: the sick of body and the sick of soul.

The Entrance into Jerusalem

The Last Week.—With the departure from Jericho Jesus enters upon the last week of his earthly life. It is in sharp contrast with what went before. We note its character. (1) A week of appeal. Jesus asserts his Messiahship and offers himself as leader. He does this in acted or spoken parable rather than in so many words, but his claim is unmistakable. Before this he had been publicly silent, and had charged his disciples with silence. (2) A week of conflict. He comes out openly against the leaders and authorities, and seems to provoke the danger from which he had previously turned away. He is not blind to the peril from the Pharisees and priests, and yet he seems purposely to challenge them. (3) It is a week of warnings. Again and again he solemnly warns leaders and people, calling them to repent before it is too late, and appealing to the people to leave their false guides. (4) It is a week of danger. That danger is present from the day of his entrance. It grows more imminent each day because of the very course that Jesus takes, until there comes the inevitable end.

On the Way.—The road from Jericho to Jerusalem is only about fifteen miles, but it rises some thirty-five hundred feet in that distance. "A more hot and heavy way it is impossible to conceive—between blistered limestone rocks, and in front the bare hills piled high, without shadow or verdure. There is no water from Jericho till you reach the roots of the Mount of Olives" (Smith, Historical Geography, 264, 265). Jesus and his company would therefore make an early start so that the hard climb might be made in the cool of the morning. It was the last stretch on their last journey together. Beside the Master and the twelve, there were the women from Galilee, certain other disciples who had left Galilee with them, and any that might have joined him on the way. Bartimæus

may have been among this number (Mark 10. 52). A couple of miles outside Jerusalem lay the village of Bethany, where we are told by the fourth Gospel that Mary and Martha and Lazarus lived. Here the company probably waited till certain preparations for the entry were made.

Jesus' Purpose in Entering the City.—During all this period that we have been studying, we have watched Jesus going about his quiet work of teaching and ministering, always as a servant, never asking attention or honor. It seems strange now that he should plan thus formally for the manner of his entrance. Jesus sends two of his disciples into the city, while the rest of the company wait. They go apparently to the house of a friend, for they are told in case any question is raised simply to say, "The Lord hath need." Here they get an ass. Seated upon this beast, and surrounded by his followers, Jesus enters the city. It was all very simple and humble, and yet it was done with definite purpose. What did it mean? Among the passages generally held by the Jews to be Messianic was that of Zechariah 9. 9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass." Jesus was speaking here in action, as he had done more than once before. Even in this last week he does not yet say in so many words, "I am the Messiah:" but for those who would understand and receive it he was declaring the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy in himself, and claiming to be the Christ (Matt. 21. 4, 5). Significant too is the passage which he chooses. By this picture of the lowly teacher sitting upon the humble beast, accompanied by friends unarmed and humble like himself, he was setting forth plainly what manner of king he claimed to be. This was his first public declaration of Messiahship.

The Enthusiasm of the People.—Meanwhile the report had spread through the city that Jesus of Nazareth was coming. The city was crowded as usual with pilgrims who had come to the Passover from all over the Jewish world.

Many who had not seen Jesus would have heard of him; but there were many here who had seen and heard him. There was probably not a city or village of Galilee in which he had taught that was not represented. These would be the first to go out to meet him. It is true they may not have had a clear understanding of Jesus' message or any strong allegiance to him, but they knew him as the prophet and wonder-worker. Perhaps the Kingdom was drawing near, as Jesus had said. Perhaps he was the forerunner, the one who was coming in the name of the Lord. The crowd increased, the pilgrims being joined by the natives of the city. Some threw their garments in the way, others branches taken from the fields, and all shouted their hosanna: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, *the kingdom* of our father David: Hosanna in the highest!"

The Protest of the Pharisees.—The enthusiasm and the cries stirred the whole city. "Who is this?" the people asked of the Galilæan multitudes, who were leaders in the demonstration. It is significant that they did not say, "This is the Messiah," but, rather, "This is Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee," the prophet. The Pharisees, whose plans were probably already made to proceed against Jesus, were angered at the demonstration. They came to Jesus with their indignant complaint: What did he mean by allowing such expressions from the people? "I tell you," replied Jesus, "that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out." Once he had restrained such expressions; now he takes them as his right. His words added to their resentment.

A Challenge and an Appeal.—The entrance into the city was Jesus' first challenge to the leaders, to be followed soon by others. It is probable that, even if the common people did not, these shrewd and watchful men knew what Jesus intended. It was a challenge to the people also, or, rather, an appeal. It was for this that he had come to the city, not simply to declare his Messiahship, but to appeal to his nation, here in the proud city of David, to see in him that Son of David to whom the generations had looked

forward. Without such an appeal here in this city his work would not be done. And he had chosen with set purpose this week, when not only the men of Jerusalem would hear him, but the Jews from all over the world.

The Cleansing of the Temple

A Visit to the Temple.—Jesus' appeal on the first day had apparently been without word by the simple act of his entry. By the time he came to the temple it was evening, and having looked about he went out to the quiet and safety of Bethany. The next day found him again in the temple and looking upon a sight that must often have grieved him before. Before him was the court of the Gentiles, the outermost part of the sacred precincts. This was the place that belonged to the proselytes, the converts to the Jewish faith from other peoples, and their presence must have appealed to Jesus in peculiar manner. Long ago the prophet had written of such as these: "Also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah, . . . even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isa. 56. 6. 7). The words were in his heart as he gazed on the scene, but what he saw was very different.

"**A Den of Robbers.**"—The temple was in control of the priestly party, as was, indeed, the city. This does not mean the common priests like Zacharias, but the coterie of which Annas, former high priest, was the powerful and unscrupulous head. These had made the temple not merely a place of merchandise, but literally, as Jesus said, "a den of robbers." Nominally for the benefit of the pilgrims, they had turned this court of the Gentiles into a place of business. In fact, they were carrying on a monopoly with opportunity for unlimited graft. Here were the tables of the money-changers. The temple tax of half a shekel, due once a year from every Jew, had to be paid in the old Jewish coinage. The pilgrims who came up with their

Grecian and Roman coins had to exchange these and pay a good premium in so doing. Here were lambs for sale for the Passover meal, and other animals for sacrifice. It would be very easy for the priests to refuse to approve animals bought elsewhere, and thus practically compel the people to buy them here. Such a monopoly would mean enormous profits. Out of regard for the poor, the law provided that these might offer a pair of doves. But even the poor did not escape their clutches, and there were doves for sale. All this sordid greed Jesus saw, while his ears were greeted with the din of buyers and sellers, the bleating of sheep and the lowing of cattle.

The Indignation of Jesus.—What followed certainly does not show us the traditional Jesus, whose gentleness has too often been conceived as a kind of weakness. Under the indignities heaped upon himself he could remain quiet, but the wrong done to others stirred his soul. And that was what caused his wrath in this case. It was not so much the greed of the priests, or even their robbery, it was the religious oppression and wrong. Here were the multitudes coming from Judæa and Galilee and lands farther distant. What sacrifices the journey had cost, and with what high enthusiasm they came! For these men from all nations the temple should have been waiting as God's house of prayer; instead it stood defiled by greed, a den of thieves. We are told that Jesus made a scourge of cords. He did not need it so far as these men were concerned. It is true, he overturned the tables, and perhaps with his disciples drove out the cattle; but the men fled before him. There is no mightier force than moral passion.

Why No Resistance?—One wonders at first that the authorities did not resist. The Jews had temple guards of their own, and the Romans also kept a guard near by. How quickly these Roman soldiers could interfere we know from their sudden appearance at the time of Paul's arrest (Acts 21. 32). But Jesus had two allies. One was the guilty conscience of these men. The other was the sympathy of the multitude. The greed and oppression and

even violence of the priestly party were notorious. The people had suffered and been helpless; their sympathy all lay with Jesus. The priests must have been all the more angry because, for the moment at least, they were helpless. If they had been indifferent before, they were now his sworn foes, as bitterly opposed as the Pharisees. They were of that class of men who are stirred by nothing so quickly as to have their purses touched; Paul met that kind of hostility in Ephesus years later (Acts 19. 23-27). It was but a matter of time until these priests would find their chance for vengeance and Jesus knew it when he used that scourge.

Directions for Study

Read Luke 19. 1-10; Mark 10. 46-52; Luke 19. 29-40; Mark 11. 15-18.

Read over the chapter and fix its events in mind:

1. The stay in Jericho, and the record of the two gracious deeds.

2. The early morning journey from Jericho to Jerusalem, a toilsome journey on that steep, hot road, and the beginning of a week of burdens that we cannot measure for both body and soul of Jesus.

3. The entrance into the city, the preparation, the enthusiasm, the quiet night at Bethany.

4. The cleansing of the temple on the following day, a wonderful deed of courage and power and the presage of what the next days were to bring.

Study now more closely the two main events of this lesson, the entry and the cleansing. Read the lesson discussion, but make the Bible passages themselves the main subject of your study.

1. The triumphal entry. Keep in mind that it was planned by Jesus, and try to determine its meaning.

2. The cleansing of the temple. Ask yourself how Jesus' character is revealed here, what picture it gives of the religious leaders of Jerusalem, and what this event meant in the bringing about of Jesus' death.

When, if ever, is physical force justifiable?

What qualities of a true soldier did Jesus have? What qualities were absent that too often appear when men and nations fight? Upon what weapons did Jesus rely?

To what extent are our social, industrial, and political ills (including war) caused by the greed of gain?

CHAPTER XVII

THE MESSAGE OF WARNING

Writers have often tried to indicate just what happened day by day during this last week. Despite the wealth of the materials that we have for this week, we cannot write the story in this way. The purpose of the evangelists was not to write a chronological record, but to give us a picture of the Christ. How wonderfully the Gospels make him stand forth before our eyes: surrounded by dangers, yet not afraid; beset with traps set by cunning foes, yet walking with sure step; met with refusal and enmity, yet warning and entreating to the end; conscious of what awaited him, yet full of courage and confidence in God. The disciples must have had their share in the events of the week; they probably aided the Master, for example, in the cleansing of the temple. But all that is passed by, and the Gospels show us Jesus only. His main work during this week was that of teaching, and we begin with his message of warning to the people.

The Call to Repentance

Parables in the Last Days.—The picture teaching of Jesus, familiar to all students, is at no time more striking than in these last days. His very entry into the city was a parable, in which he set forth his claim to be the Messiah and his character as such. He is constantly using parable and picture to bring his warnings, to assert his claims, and to answer his foes. Never was his skill as a teacher more manifest. If he had declared in so many words that he was the Messiah, he would probably have stirred an armed uprising against Rome. When he put into picture his charges against the leaders, they could not escape the meaning and yet they could not move against him.

Preaching Repentance.—We note first his call to repentance. Here in Jerusalem he saw the need even more than in Galilee. They were proud of their temple, of their religion, of their race, these Jews; they were filled with hate of the Roman. They did not see that the great obstacle to the Kingdom was the sin in their own hearts: the greed and violence of the priests, the hypocrisy and bigotry and pride of the Pharisees, the shallowness and indifference of the people. But we do wrong if we think of Jesus as simply plying the lash of scorn and condemnation. It was his people, his city, his brethren; and he bore their sins in sorrow and anguish upon his own heart. Jesus uses two incidents to enforce his call to repentance (Luke 13. 1-5). It seems that the soldiers of Pilate had slain certain Galilæan pilgrims who were offering their sacrifices at the temple, an event that fits in with what we know of the character of this ruler. It is not unlikely that those who reported this to Jesus began questioning him: Why did these particular men suffer? Were they sinners beyond others? Jesus repudiates this. Why such evils come he does not tell them. But one thing he does tell them: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

The Parables of Warning

The Parable of the Great Supper.—And now we come to the series of great parables which Jesus spoke during these days. Three of these we shall take up in this lesson: the parables of the great supper, the fig tree, and the vineyard. While we cannot be certain, the parable of the great supper was probably spoken during this time (Luke 14. 15-24). The Jews were accustomed to picture the blessings of the Messianic age under the form of a great supper. That explains the ejaculation of some guest at the table who said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." It was one of those pious expressions that are easily uttered and that may mean very little. These men could talk beautifully about sitting down in the kingdom of God, but they could not see the kingdom of God when it came to them.

To show their folly and sin, he tells the story of the man who made the great supper (Matthew says it was a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, Matt. 22. 1-14). The invitations were sent out in advance, and then, in leisurely Eastern fashion, when the supper was ready, the servant went around to bid the guests come. Such a feast was a high privilege. To slight such an invitation was an insult, and yet these guests did this incredible thing; they made all manner of excuses and refused to come. Thereupon the master of the house, indignant and angry, sent out his servants to bring in the poor and blind and crippled, and at length even the beggars from the roadside, and these sat down at the feast which the friends had scorned. Did the guests at the table with Jesus understand his parable? They were doing this same incredible and foolish thing. They were refusing the invitation, and meanwhile the publicans and harlots, the outcasts and sinners, were eagerly receiving the message. It was what he had said once before: "Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth" (Matt. 8. 11, 12).

The Parable of the Fig Tree.—The parable of the fig tree was another call to repentance (Luke 13. 6-9). A certain man had a fig tree. It occupied valuable ground, it had received constant care, but it had never borne fruit. The vinedresser begged for it another chance. He would dig and fertilize again; then, if it did not bear, it would have to come down. The nation was like the fig tree. It was fair enough to look at; but where were the fruits of righteousness that it should have borne with all the care that God had given it? Where were the humble reverence and mercy and good will? They were quick enough to condemn a publican or one like the woman taken in adultery, but the nation's sin they did not see. And he was like the vinedresser, digging and dunging for the last time. Would they repent at this last call?

The Deputation from the Sanhedrin.—The third parable is that of the vineyard. In this case the Gospels give us

the special circumstances under which the parable was spoken. It was apparently the day after the cleansing of the temple that there came to Jesus a deputation of "the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders," demanding by what authority he did these things (Mark 11. 27, 28). Jesus met their question, as we shall see in our next chapter, and silenced them. Then when they stood speechless, he turned upon them and gave them this parable of warning and condemnation before all the people. It was this that made the people think of the great prophets of the past, that here in the very seat of their power Jesus should thus denounce these men of place and authority.

The Parable of the Vineyard.—The figure of the vineyard was not unfamiliar (Matt. 21. 33-46). The psalmist had employed it (Psa. 80. 8-19), but it was Isaiah who had used it for the purpose which it now served with Jesus (Isa. 5. 1-7). A man had planted a vineyard. It had taken money and time and thought. He had set out the vines, made the hedge to keep out animals, built the wine-press, and erected the tower for the watchmen. Such land was commonly leased either upon shares or for a fixed amount of its product. In due time, accordingly, the owner sent his servant to receive his share of the product; but the servant came back beaten and with empty hands. Thus they treated the other servants also, whom the owner with marvelous forbearance sent to them one after another. When at last he sent his own son, they put him to death, thinking thus to get the latter's inheritance for themselves. "When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" asked Jesus. They knew what the parable meant. Isaiah had already made the application to his own generation: "For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry." Jesus was charging against them what Isaiah had charged against the Israel of his day. Had any nation ever been privileged and cared for as Jehovah had cared for Israel? Had not God the right, then, to look for fruits?

And what was it that God wanted? Not their show of piety, their endless sacrifices and tithings and washings and Sabbath observances. It was justice and righteousness and mercy, as it had been of old. This people of old had killed the prophets and stoned them that were sent to her; what would she do now? The last and the greatest of the servants had been slain; what would they do to the Son?

Another Assertion of Messiahship.—Here again Jesus sets forth plainly his claim to be the Messiah. The Messiah was often spoken of as "the Son," and it is to the son whom the Lord of the vineyard had finally sent that Jesus compares himself here. That claim Jesus now makes in still more pointed fashion. "Did ye never read in the scriptures," he says,

> **"The stone which the builders rejected,**
> **The same was made the head of the corner;**
> **This was from the Lord,**
> **And it is marvelous in our eyes?"**

Openly and plainly he adds: "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Jesus' bold denunciation of these leaders and his claim to be the Messiah angered them equally. What he said was perfectly plain to them, though the people probably understood it but in part. And yet they were helpless. They did not dare to denounce him for claiming to be the Messiah, for that would have aroused still more the people, who as yet held him only for a prophet. And they did not dare to try to seize him, for the people had shown plainly on the day of his entry and at the time of the temple cleansing that they were with him. But the people themselves, as we shall see, were not ready to stand on his side.

Jesus' Lament Over the City

The Prophet of Sorrow.—There is no harder lot than to stand as a prophet of warning and speak words that you know will not be heeded. Such was Jesus' lot. It was his to give the appeal. His work would not have been finished

if he had not sounded that message here in Jerusalem. How did he feel as he gave this message? And how far did he realize what the end would be? There are two sayings of Jesus that let us see into his heart at this time. They show that Jesus had no illusions as to his success; the people would reject him and the city was doomed. They show us too how deep the sorrow of his heart was as he thought of this people that was his people, and this city of their pride. We see Jesus, the patriot, forgetting his own terrible fate so near at hand, and remembering only his nation, his brothers.

His Two Sayings.—The first of these sayings was spoken by Jesus when he entered the city. It was in the midst of the enthusiasm of the disciples and the shoutings of the multitude. Jesus knew how little all this meant. He was looking forward to the end: "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke 19. 41-44). The other saying shows the yearning love of Jesus, like the love of a mother, in words among the most beautiful that men have ever heard. These words were spoken just after the terrible denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees; he had the courage to denounce, but his deepest heart was love. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23. 37-39).

A Terrible Fulfillment.—Never did words have a more terrible fulfillment than that which came to the lament of

Jesus in the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred about forty years after this time. The priests and Pharisees had refused the Prince of Peace who had come meek and lowly and riding upon an ass. As a result the people gave ear more and more to fanatical preachers of revolt against Rome. The final result was, against the wish of priest and Pharisee, a futile uprising against the empire. The terrors of the French Revolution are probably the only scenes in history which may be fitly compared with the horrors of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. There was plenty of courage with the people and a certain kind of faith; but what one feels most of all in reading the story is the madness of the people and the selfishness and willfulness of most of the leaders. Before they fought with the Romans, they began fighting among themselves. That fighting continued as the Romans drew near. Three parties under arms held different portions of the city, burning and slaying as they could. Each tried to burn up the grain supplies which the others possessed, thus themselves preparing that awful famine which did as much as Roman arms to subdue the city. Only when the Romans actually began to assault the city did they stop warring upon each other and turn against the common enemy. But it was too late. Some fell in the fighting, and they were the most fortunate. Many perished from hunger. Most of the rest were slaughtered when the soldiers entered the city. Some were carried off to Rome to grace the triumphal procession of Titus, whose monument is that arch in the Eternal City under which no Jew will pass even to this day. Over a million, Josephus tells us, lost their lives by hunger, flame, or the sword. Nearly a hundred thousand were carried off captive, while countless thousands were sold as slaves. The picture is terrible enough even if we discount largely the figures of this historian. One little company had escaped from the city in time, the Christian community that took refuge in the town of Pella in Perea. Were there any besides those Christians out of that great city that remembered the words of Jesus: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate"?

Directions for Study

The Scripture passages: Luke 13. 1-9; 14. 15-24; Matthew 21. 33-46; 23. 37-39.

Call to mind the events of the last chapter, and what was said there of the last week as a whole.

Read through, if possible at one sitting, the narrative given above with the Scripture passages. Then take up the details as given below.

Read Luke 13. 1-5: Jesus' message of repentance is given here just as in Galilee. Note how ready the people were to condemn others, as the Galilæans, or the woman taken in adultery (see John 8. 1-11). Which is easier for us, criticism or repentance? Note how little Jesus cares for a theological discussion, how much for the practical reality.

The parables of warning. What were the advantages of this picture form of teaching, especially during this last week?

1. The supper, Luke 14. 15-24. Read Matthew 22. 1-14, if you have time, and note the differences in detail, illustrating the variations which naturally came about in handing down such teaching orally.

2. The fig tree, Luke 13. 6-9. Note how Jesus takes his pictures from common life.

3. The vineyard, Matthew 21. 33-46. Read the references to Psalms and Isaiah. Did Jesus gain or lose by using here a figure familiar to his hearers? Consider how effectively great speakers and writers have used familiar passages or phrases from the Bible.

The lament, Luke 19. 41-44; Matthew 23. 37-39. Note the different circumstances in the two cases. This is another wonderful glimpse into the heart of Jesus. We should carry this with us in all the study of this last week.

CHAPTER XVIII

FINAL CONFLICTS

The last week was a week of warning, during which Jesus made his final appeal. It was a week of conflict as well, which step by step became sharper and more open. No one knew better than Jesus how dangerous was the path which he was treading. The support of the people had thus far kept the leaders from taking open action against him. The crowds had shouted hosannas when he made his entry, and when he cleansed the temple courts they had approved, while the priests stood by in helpless anger. But Jesus had no illusions as to how much this all meant, or as to what the end would be. He knew that there was no deep conviction back of this enthusiasm. The time had come, however, when he must bring the matter to an issue. The people must choose whom they would take as leader, the scribes and priests, or Jesus. On the one side, therefore, we have the efforts of the leaders to entrap Jesus, and this we shall study first. On the other side we have Jesus' open attacks upon the leaders, and this forms the latter part of our study.

The Attacks Upon Jesus

The Challenge from the Sanhedrin.—The first assault upon him was made by a formal deputation of the leaders which came apparently the day after the entry and the cleansing of the temple (Matt. 21. 23-27). Mark says this delegation was composed of chief priests, scribes, and elders, which suggests that they came from the Sanhedrin, as this was composed of these three elements. Their question was the first of a series of efforts to entrap Jesus: "By what authority doest thou these things?" It was apparently an effort to compel Jesus in so many words to declare his Messiahship. It must have astonished the peo-

ple to see this young prophet from Nazareth turn upon the powerful priests and revered scribes, and rout this imposing body by a single question: "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?" They could not say from heaven, for they had refused John's call; they dared not say from men, for the people held John as a prophet. And so these reputed leaders and teachers were compelled to say, "We know not."

The Answer and the Parable.—It was a skillful counter, but it was far more than that. Jesus was not trying merely to silence his foes. In the first place, he had answered their question and in such manner that they could not attack him. His authority, he indicated, was like that of John; it came from God himself and no Sanhedrin could impeach it. In the second place, he had indicted them; they could not deny the authority of John, and yet they had been disobedient to his message. The sinners whom they scorned had pressed into the Kingdom while they stayed out. Then Jesus drove the rebuke home with one of those parables whose meaning they could not evade and whose condemnation they could not escape (Matt. 21. 28-32). The sinners who had responded to John's message and his own were like the son who had lightly refused his father at first, but who afterward repented and went. They, in turn, were like the second son, who made great protestation of obedience, but in the end disobeyed. Jesus never minimizes sin; he did not condone the sins of publicans and harlots. But the question was, who obeyed in the end? What did all their pious assumptions amount to against this one fact: they had been unrepentant and disobedient in the end?

Pharisees and Herodians: the Tribute Money.—After this parable of the two sons came the two parables of warning that we studied last week, those of the vineyard and the supper. Then followed another attempt to silence Jesus, this time by trying to discredit him with the people (Matt. 22. 15-22). For this purpose the Pharisees sent some of their disciples with certain Herodians. Their attack was cleverly planned. They would first disarm

Jesus' suspicions by expressing their appreciation: "Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one." Then they would put their question, a hotly debated one at the time: "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" If he answered no, there would be good grounds for an information before Pilate. If he answered yes, it would alienate the people, for it would be advising them to acquiesce in the shameful yoke of Rome. But again Jesus' unexpected answer left them astonished and speechless. At his request they brought him a Roman denarius; and when he asked whose image and writing was on the coin, they could only answer, "Cæsar's." "Then he saith unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." It would be wrong to take these words of Jesus and build upon them a theory of the relation of church and state, or how to divide the religious from the secular. All of life was religious for Jesus. But these men were quibbling about little things and forgetting the great. This matter of acknowledging Rome was not the vital thing. As a matter of fact, they *had* recognized Rome; they had accepted her government in fact and were using her coins. What did it matter that they paid taxes to her? But the thing that did matter they were forgetting: to give to God the things that were God's. And that was what Jesus was concerned about, here as everywhere. It is even yet easier for us to debate religion than to do the will of God.

The Sadducees: An Attempt at Ridicule.—The next attack was from the Sadducees (Matt. 22. 23-33). These were practically limited to the priests and their party. They were the aristocrats, the "old families" and the men of position. It meant a good deal of condescension on their part even to notice this young prophet. As a matter of fact, they intended to do so only to get a laugh at his expense. They knew that a man could be worsted with ridicule who could not be downed with other weapons. Jesus, of course, believed in the resurrection like the Pharisees; they did not. Now the Law had prescribed

(Deut. 25. 5-10) that in case a man died leaving no children, any surviving single brother should marry the widow and the first child should be considered as the child of the man that had died. So the Sadducees brought their foolish question, of itself calculated to raise a laugh: If a woman under this law married in turn seven brothers, to which one would she belong in the resurrection? Jesus leaves their trivial question to one side, and lifts the whole matter to a plane of faith and moral earnestness that rebukes the triflers and astonishes the people. You err not knowing the Scriptures, he says. In that life beyond they neither marry nor are given in marriage. Nor do you know the power of God, with your denial of the resurrection. You profess faith in the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; but he is the God of the living, and not of the dead.

"Which Is the Great Commandment?"—Not all of the leaders were hostile to Jesus, though it is natural that we should hear mainly of that greater number that did oppose him. Luke tells us that some of the scribes who had heard this reply to the Sadducees said to him, "Teacher, thou hast well said" (Luke 20. 39). It would seem that the next question put to Jesus came also from men who were honestly testing Jesus, men who had been impressed with the way he had worsted the Sadducees (Matt. 22. 34-40). Innumerable commands and rules made up their religion, and they often debated the query, "Which is the great commandment?" It probably did not surprise his hearers that Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." These were among the first words that Jewish children learned, and as pious Jews they repeated them every day. But it was something new that Jesus should add, "And a second like *unto it* is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The legalism of the scribes emphasized all these rules as something demanded by God and done for him. Jesus showed that God wanted them first of all to love and serve their fellow men. In still another way this answer shows the difference between the teaching of Jesus and that of the scribes. Their religion was a matter of many rules, his concern was with the inner

spirit. The man who had this inner spirit of love flowing out to God and man, had kept the law and the prophets.

Jesus Attacks His Foes

Why Did Jesus Attack the Leaders?—Jesus met his foes and parried their thrusts. But he did more than this, he turned the attack upon them. His teaching, as they had clearly discerned, had been opposed to them from the beginning. He had emphasized the inner life against their outer forms, the spirit of mercy against their harsh judgments, the spirit of humility against their pride and self-satisfaction, the love of men as pleasing to God instead of the keeping of rules. In all this his opposition had been more or less indirect. Now he attacked them openly and by name. His purpose, however, was not to scourge them or abase them. He was fighting for the people. It was not from anger because they opposed him that he spoke. But they, who should have led the people into the Kingdom, were turning them astray. They were the (willfully) blind leaders of the (ignorantly) blind people. It is notable that his chief attack was not upon the priests, for these had little influence with the people; it was upon the scribes and Pharisees whom the people had trusted and who were the real leaders.

We may divide the twenty-third chapter of Matthew into three parts: (1) the indictment against the piety of the Pharisees, 1-12; (2) the seven woes, 13-33; (3) the judgment and the lament, 34-39.

1. Pharisaic Piety Indicted.—Jesus attacks the piety of the Pharisees (23. 1-12). They had stood as the models of devout religion; was not their whole life given up to the one task of knowing the Law and keeping it? Jesus points out the subtle sin of pride and selfish ambition in all this. For the eyes of men all this is done that they may have praise and reverence, that they may rule over men and be called "rabbi." In the Kingdom, Jesus says, it is humility and service that count. There is no room for masters among the children of one Father.

2. The Seven Woes.—The seven woes might be contrasted with the seven beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. They are really so many charges against the scribes and Pharisees. We may sum them up as follows: (1) They shut others out of the Kingdom and will not receive the truth themselves, verses 13, 14. (2) They are always trying to win disciples, only to make these worse than themselves, 15. (3) They claim all wisdom, but they teach folly. They are blind quibblers, allowing one oath, refusing another, not seeing that men should swear by nothing at all, since heaven and earth are full of God, 16-22; see Matt. 5. 33-37. (4) They pretend to so great piety that they go beyond what the Law asks and tithe the petty garden herbs. Such piety is a sham because they leave aside the things that really count, justice and mercy and faith, 23, 24. (5) They are scrupulous about all manner of baptisms and washings, but they forget the inner cleansing and are full of extortion and excess, 25, 26. (6) They are like the graves which are always whitewashed just before the Passover so that men might avoid them and not be defiled for the feast. Like these graves, they are beautiful from without, but there is horrible corruption within, 27, 28. (7) They pretend to great reverence for the holy men of the past, building beautiful tombs for the prophets and declaring that they would not have joined in the slaying of these men. They are, in fact, true sons of their fathers, 29-33.

3. Judgment and Lament.—And so there comes the judgment, 34-36. The measure is not quite full, for they are yet to slay Jesus and those whom he sends; but it will fall upon this generation. Last of all we hear the lament, which we have considered before, 37-39. With this note of sorrow Jesus ends.

The Anger of Jesus.—The passion of Jesus in his condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees has seemed to some an inconsistency in his character. They have found this anger hard to reconcile with his spirit of love. They have failed to see that this anger was but a part of his love. His flaming indignation sprang from his very mercy. His

anger was not like our anger. It was no wrong done to himself that ever stirred him. He could turn the left cheek when smitten on the right. But it was different when it came to wrong done to others. His condemnation of these leaders was his hatred of sham and wrong and oppression and misuse of power and place, and all this was a part of his love for the people. There can be no high love of holiness without a deep hate of sin. And we must hate it in the world as well as in our own soul. Much that passes as generous broad-mindedness is mere indifference, or moral shallowness. But the holy anger of Jesus is not easy for us to attain. Selfish passion is apt to be mixed in it. We must first love with something of his love, and sorrow for sin as he sorrowed, before we can speak in holy anger as he spoke.

Directions for Study

The Scripture passages: Matthew 21. 23-32; 22. 15-40; 23. 1-39 (Mark 12. 28-34).

Review the main items of the last two chapters, trying to grasp this last week as a whole in your mind. We have studied so far the entry, the temple cleansing, and Jesus' series of warnings and appeals. Recall the three great parables of warnings. Now we have the conflicts.

I. The Attacks Made Upon Jesus

1. The Sanhedrin. This included priests (mostly Sadducees) and Pharisees. It represented the highest authority religious and civil. Ask the three questions: What did they want? How did they proceed? How did they succeed?

2. The Pharisees. This was the attack of orthodoxy and piety, so-called. Ask the same three questions as before.

3. The Sadducees. These were the liberalists. There is a broadness that comes with great convictions, and there is a seeming broadness that is merely indifference. The latter describes the Sadducees. They were trifling even here. Only when their pockets were touched, as in the temple cleansing (for the chief priests belonged mainly to this group), were they really concerned.

II. The Attacks Made By Jesus

1. Note the men whom Jesus attacked. Why the scribes and Pharisees rather than the priests and Sadducees?

2. Note the purpose of Jesus' attacks. He was not simply striking back.

3. This explains the spirit of Jesus' attack.

4. What was the substance of his charges?

How far can a Christian man escape fighting? What should be our attitude toward social, political, and other evils? Name some battles that need to be fought to-day.

CHAPTER XIX

PREPARING THE DISCIPLES FOR THE FUTURE

Jesus' conflicts with his foes were over; the last encounter had taken place, and they were making plans for his end. The last message of warning had been given to the people and the last appeal, until the mute appeal of that hour when he was to appear before them as prisoner condemned. But the work with the disciples was not yet done. He had told them of his coming death, though they do not seem to have grasped it; now he must prepare them further for the future. Above all two things were needful: the warning of duties and dangers before them, the encouragement of the final triumph. The disciples themselves put the question which gave the opportunity for this lesson.

The Message Concerning the Future

The Destruction of the Temple Foretold.—Jesus and his disciples were leaving the temple, probably on the last day of his public ministry. The disciples turned for a last look at the glorious structure which lifted its shining walls of white marble decorated with gold. It was the pride of every Jew throughout the world, and even Roman writers had paid tribute to its splendors. It was built of enormous stones, as much as twenty-four feet in length and almost half as broad. "What manner of stones and what manner of buildings!" exclaimed the disciples in admiration. "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down," was Jesus' answer. Deeply astonished, four of the disciples came to Jesus later to ask him further about this, and thus it was that Jesus began to talk to them about the future (Mark 13. 1-37).

There is no passage in the Gospels more difficult than this, and none that has given rise to more controversy. Let us see first what it contains. It is divided into three parts, each part containing a declaration about the future and closing with an exhortation. (1) First, there are to come terrible occurrences in nature and among men, earthquakes, famines, wars, insurrections. This is called the "beginning of travail," a phrase used by the Jews to describe the birth pangs that were to precede the new age. The disciples are to be hated and persecuted, but those that endure shall be saved (13. 5-13). (2) Then shall come the terrible trial upon Judæa and Jerusalem, and the destruction of the city by the Gentiles. False messiahs will arise, but the disciples, forewarned, will not follow them (13. 14-23). (3) At last there shall appear signs in the heavens, falling stars and eclipse of sun and moon. Then the Son of man is to come in the clouds with his angels and gather his followers from all parts of the earth. Let the disciples, therefore, watch and be faithful at their tasks like good servants (13. 24-27).

Its Two Interpretations

The Adventist Theory.—There are two ways of handling this passage which we may consider. The first way takes it literally and declares in effect that the purpose of Jesus was to give us a detailed program of the future, just as we find these in other Jewish writings of this time. Prominent here is the interpretation of second adventists who in their many forms number far more than the small denomination bearing that name. Those who hold this view spend a great deal of time discussing the ages and stages of the world's progress, and the meaning of all these "signs." In practically every generation some have been found who were sure that certain earthquakes or famines or wars of their day were the "signs" that indicated the beginning of the end. These interpreters put all these events, the coming of our Lord, the destruction and persecution and all the rest, in the future.

Objections to This Theory.—There are a number of serious objections to this theory. (1) We must study Jesus' teaching as a whole in order to understand it rightly, and this theory does not represent his spirit or message as we have seen it. The Jewish mind was full of such dreams of the future, but Jesus did not discuss them. Instead, he talked of "justice, and mercy, and faith." That was why he disappointed them. With perfect confidence in God, Jesus left the future to him. His great task was the present one, to summon men to repentance and faith and righteousness. (2) There is much in this passage that refers very plainly to the coming destruction of Jerusalem, the terrible end of which Jesus had warned the Jews and for which he was now preparing the disciples. This had its fulfillment a generation after Jesus' death. (3) It was the constant habit of Jesus to use picture language for spiritual facts and events. Witness the language about the temptation, about Satan falling as lightning from heaven, and the parables of the Kingdom. To literalize everything here is to pervert the intended meaning. (4) If these words are all to be taken literally, what shall be done with those passages in which Jesus clearly declares that he is to return within a lifetime (Matt. 10. 23; 16. 28; 24. 34)? Right in the midst of Mark's words comes the verse: "This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished" (Mark 13. 30). To make generation here mean Jewish race is to do unpardonable violence to the plain meaning. And if the reference is to something within a generation, then why apply this to what is still in the future?

The Message as Practical.—The second interpretation of this message may be called the practical and ethical. By this we do not mean that Jesus did not speak of the future. On the contrary, he was preparing his disciples for that future. But he was not trying to satisfy their curiosity or ours by a portrayal of details. They will have work, and he wishes to make them ready; they will have trials, and he wishes to warn them. He is the same earnest practical teacher and friend. It is to be noted, moreover,

that Jesus did not speak these words to the multitude, nor even to the larger group of disciples that was probably with him in the temple. Matthew says that these words were addressed to the disciples privately, and Mark declares that it was to the four, Peter, James, John, and Andrew.

Has Outside Matter Crept In?—Many scholars hold that outside material has crept into these passages and that we no longer have here the exact words of Jesus. They hold this in particular of the passages Mark 13. 5-8, 14-20, 24-27. It must be remembered that the teachings of Jesus were passed on orally for a long time before they were written down, that the minds of the disciples were full of such hopes and ideas, and that it would be most easy for them without any thought of changing the Lord's message to put it in the phrases familiar to them and so modify it. This is, of course, but a theory, and cannot be proved or disproven. That the words of Jesus were not always exactly recalled and recorded is plain when we compare the accounts of the Gospels with each other in cases where they describe the same event or report the same saying.

What the Message Meant

Its Three Elements.—Taking now only what is clear in these passages, Jesus' essential message stands out plainly.

(1) He foretells the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. That meant far more than merely the ruin of a wonderful structure. It meant that the altar was to be overthrown, the sacrifice and solemn ritual to cease. It meant that the religious leadership of the world was to belong no more to ancient Israel, but that a new Israel of his followers was to take their place.

(2) Jesus declares that he will return to set up his kingdom. From the time when he began to tell them of his coming suffering and death he had also told them of his resurrection. Now he declares to them that his enemies are not to triumph, though they slay him; his work will not be defeated by his death, but he will return. This is

the heart of his message and this glorious confidence in ultimate triumph sustained him to the last. It was his Father's will that he should suffer, but the great end was sure.

(3) Finally he forewarns his disciples of the suffering and persecution that will come to them, but declares that those that are faithful shall be saved.

A Message of Encouragement.—The message was first of all one of encouragement. He would no longer be with them in physical presence; how would they stand the test and bear the burdens of the coming days? To forewarn is to forearm, and he tells them what will come. They are to be persecuted and brought to trial. Let them be brave; God's Spirit will guide them when they speak. Judgment is coming upon Israel through Israel's enemies. When that time comes, then the disciples are to flee from Jerusalem and Judæa, a warning which we know from history was obeyed by the church in Jerusalem. But the Son of man will return, and "he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

A Word of Admonition.—The message, in the second place, was one of admonition. They were not merely to endure in hope; they were to watch and to work. Jesus was thinking not simply of their individual welfare, but of the work which they had to do. He was giving them a great task; they were to preach the good tidings to men, they were to administer in his place while he was gone. He was leaving everything in their hands, trusting all to this little group which he had been training. Could he depend upon them? Would they be faithful? The thought must have rested heavily upon his heart. And so, as a part of this message of preparation, Jesus speaks various parables which all center about the ideas of watchfulness and faithfulness.

Parables of Watchfulness and Faithfulness

Three Parables on Being Watchful.—In three parables, or likenesses, Jesus gives the lesson of being watchful. There

is the likeness of the master of the house and the thief: watch, for you do not know the hour any more than the master knew when the thief was coming (Matt. 24. 42-44). There is the parable of the faithful steward: he did not know when the master would return, but he was faithful, and the master found him doing his work (Matt. 24. 45-51). The parable of the ten virgins has been used to teach all manner of truths, but its lesson is simply this: be watchful (Matt. 25. 1-13).

The Parable of the Talents.—The most suggestive of the parables is that of the talents, or the absent lord and his servants (Matt. 25. 14-30). This man of large wealth had to go to another country for a long period. He called together a number of his servants, men who were really stewards or bankers rather than servants in the common sense. To one of these he gave some six thousand dollars, a very large sum for that time. To another he gave twenty-four hundred dollars, with varying amounts to still others. Thus he put his wealth into their hands. Long afterward he returned. These men had finely repaid his confidence. Indeed, they had doubled his wealth, and now, having proved their worth, they were placed by their master in still higher positions of trust. There was one exception; one man had let his money lie in idleness and now handed back just what he had received.

Here again we must not read lessons into all the details. Jesus uses such a parable to teach one great truth, and that is plain in this case. Be faithful, he says to the disciples, in the great trust that I have committed to you. There is nothing here of signs and seasons and feverish curiosity and calculations about the return of the absent lord. The lord is to come: that is enough for the servants, meanwhile let them do their work. We realize to-day, as the disciples could not, how great the trust was that Jesus was putting into their hands. To this little company he was giving not a few thousands of gold, but all the work that he had begun. They were to spread the message, to gather the followers and shepherd them, to lay the foundations of that kingdom which through these

centuries has been growing from little to great like the mustard tree, and permeating the world with a new life like the silent spreading leaven.

The Fulfillment of the Message

Jesus' Expectation of His Return.—So far we have been looking simply at the gospel teaching. Now it is time to look at history and ask: Was this fulfilled? Has Jesus returned? Or is this all in the future? At the outset we must face this question: Did not Jesus expect to return personally and in visible form within a generation? Let us divide this question before answering. (1) As regards the return within a generation: It seems certain that Jesus did expect this, as has already been noted (Matt. 10. 23; 16. 28; 24. 34). "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come," he says, when he sends out the twelve. A little later he declares, "There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (2) Did he expect to return in visible form? That is probable, though we cannot be so certain here, for the words which speak of his coming upon the clouds of heaven (Matt. 24. 30), which are taken from Daniel, may have been used by him in picture form. We know that Jesus did not return in such visible form within a generation, nor has he since then up to this day.

These facts have proved a quite unnecessary ground of stumbling for some. What we need to recall is that our Lord came to reveal to us the Spirit of the Father and the Father's will, and this he did in his life and word. He did not come to satisfy our curiosity about all things, nor was he endowed with knowledge as to all things. He was endowed with perfect wisdom for the task that the Father had given him. He humbled himself, Paul says, and came to us as man (Phil. 2. 6-8). The Gospels plainly show us this limitation of knowledge which Paul indicates that he took upon himself. He looks to the Father for guidance and direction in his work with a humility and

a constancy in prayer that shame his disciples. To the very last, in the garden, he questions whether the cup of the cross may not pass from him. He knows there in the garden that his death is not to be the end. He knows that his cause will triumph and that he will complete the work which he has begun. But the time and manner he does not know. Very plainly he says to his disciples: "But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13. 32). Over the limitations that the Gospels show us so frankly we do not need to stumble.

In this teaching of Jesus, therefore, about his return and the coming of the Kingdom, we distinguish between the substance and the form. So far as the form is concerned, Jesus uses more or less the language of his day, just as he used the Aramaic speech, taking such a picture as that from Daniel which those to whom he spoke would clearly understand. The substance lies not in the manner of his return, but in the fact. It is the same way as to the time of the setting up of his kingdom: it is possible that he expected a speedy triumph. If that be true, though we cannot be sure of it, then we must say, that was only the form. The substance was the conviction that his kingdom was to come despite Jewish bigotry and Roman force.

The Confirmation of History.—Leaving this question as to the exact form of Jesus' teaching, let us turn now to the substance and see what history itself has to say. What has happened in the history of the Kingdom since that time? For history itself is a revelation of God's plan and purpose. First, let us ask as to the return. What a wonderful confirmation there has been of Jesus' confidence and of his word to the disciples! Jesus returned. One might better say, he never left his disciples. He did not come in the visible presence for which they looked. We know that Paul and his churches did expect such a visible return in their day, and some were troubled at the thought of what would be the lot of those who had died before the coming (2 Thess. 4. 13-15). We know that later on the Christians were taunted because Jesus did not appear

as they expected (2 Pet. 3. 4). But God had "provided some better thing" concerning them, though they did not realize it at the time. In spiritual presence Jesus was with them, guiding and aiding them in all things. He was present as spiritual power transforming men's lives through the Spirit of God. Paul realized that truth, and he calls this new life of the believer sometimes the Spirit of God in men and sometimes "Christ in us." There were no long years of postponement, not even till the fall of Jerusalem. The Christ was present in the Spirit given to the first disciples at Jerusalem; and his Spirit and presence, illumining men's minds and creating new lives, have been the world's light and life ever since. One of the worst forms of unbelief in our day lies in the failure of Christ's followers to see the presence and power of his Spirit in the world to-day, not simply in a few saints or an occasional revival, but in the deep currents of human life.

Directions for Study

The Scripture passages: Mark 13. 1-37; Matthew 25. 1-13; 24. 42-51.

It is most important to understand clearly the conditions under which Jesus spoke these words, and his purpose. They were spoken privately to the disciples, and with the practical purpose of warning and encouraging them. It is these men before him whom Jesus has in mind in thus speaking.

Read Mark 13 and the lesson narrative which discusses it. Notice the division into three parts as suggested. Then consider the threefold message that is pointed out. It is not necessary, nor is it possible, to understand all this. For one thing, we do not know how much is picture and how much is literally intended. What is important is that we shall get the message of encouragement and warning, and realize what it meant to these disciples in the days that followed.

Read with care the parables given in Matthew 24. 42-51; 25. 1-30, and ask what these meant for the twelve and their fellow disciples.

Read the discussion on the fulfillment of the message, and note the important distinction between substance and form. Has the reality been greater or less than the early church anticipated? Will the final fulfillment be greater or less than what the church of to-day expects?

What is there in the world's life to-day which indicates the

presence and power of Christ? What will the completion of his reign bring?

Back of the discussion of this chapter lies the larger question of the nature of the Kingdom and the manner of its coming. On this subject read Chapters XVII to XX of "The Teachings of Jesus," a companion volume to this. Note especially Chapter XX.

CHAPTER XX

THE LAST SUPPER

We have seen how Jesus left the temple in the evening, foretelling its destruction and preparing his disciples for the days that lay before them. That day was apparently the last day of his public ministry. There may have been a day of quiet in between, spent with his disciples. In this interval, according to Mark's order of statement, occurred the supper at Bethany and the anointing. Then on the next day came the last meal with his disciples and, swiftly following, the terrible events of the ensuing night and morning. In these last hours we are moved by the tender solicitude of Jesus, so keenly conscious of what was coming, yet thoughtful for his disciples rather than fearful for himself. At the same time the unconsciousness of these disciples strikes us as something almost tragic, as they go on dreaming, quarreling, loving, but unable to realize, despite their Master's words, that the end is near.

The Supper and the Anointing

A Deed of Devotion.—The little village of Bethany lay just outside the city. Here Mary and Martha and Lazarus lived, and here, apparently, Jesus had other friends as well. He had no doubt visited Jerusalem year by year at the time of the great feasts ever since that first visit when he was twelve, and Bethany was probably a regular stopping place. Simon the leper, as Mark and Matthew call him, may have been one whom Jesus had healed; if so, the supper was his gift of gratitude and honor. But the evening brought a greater gift to Jesus, and one that called forth his deepest appreciation. It was no breach of Oriental custom for those who were not invited guests to look into or to enter the room. It roused no comment, therefore, when a woman entered during the progress of the meal, and passed

around behind the couch where Jesus reclined at the table. There she brought out an alabaster bottle filled with spikenard, an ointment so precious that only those of great wealth could use it. Standing behind Jesus, the woman poured the whole of the rare and costly contents upon the Master's head. The bottle itself she had already broken, that after this high service it might never be employed for lesser use (Mark 14. 1-9).

The Appreciation of Jesus.—It was a beautiful deed. Its meaning was not measured merely by the cost of the ointment. There was a symbolism in the breaking of the bottle, and a special fitness in the time at which this tribute of prodigal devotion was paid. And Jesus missed none of this. As we watch him, we have another evidence of the wonderful completeness of his character. But a few hours ago he stood before the leaders of the city; all that was strong and heroic was in that scene. He knew the danger, but was not afraid. His words of rebuke were like the smiting of a sword. Here everything is gracious and tender and sympathetic. He is the Christ of little children, the Christ of the loving spirit, appreciative of all that is beautiful in nature and in the hearts of men. But he saw something deeper still, which the woman herself could not know. All unwittingly she had anointed him for the burial, performing before his death that last service of sorrowing love. In the hard hours of these last days the woman's gracious deed was doubly appreciated.

The Criticism and the Rebuke.—The words of the disciples stood in unlovely contrast with the deed. They were blind to its beauty and its meaning. They criticized the waste. The ointment was worth three hundred denarii —about sixty dollars. Why had it not been sold and the money given to the poor? The rebuke that Jesus spoke was well merited: I shall not be with you long, but you will always have the opportunity of caring for the poor. Then he added his tribute: "Wheresoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." There is a sublime confidence here that we must

not overlook. On the very eve of defeat and death, he knows that his gospel will yet be preached throughout the world.

The Last Evening

Jesus' Plan.—The last evening had come. So far Jesus had escaped his foes. By day they had not dared to seize him on account of the sympathy of the people; by night he had eluded them by stopping outside the city, perhaps each time in a different place. Now, however, the end was at hand; his work was done and their plans were ready. This last evening he had carefully planned to spend in privacy with his disciples. Apparently as a measure of safety, Jesus himself had made the plans for this supper, arranging with a friend in the city for the use of a room. He knew how imminent the peril now was, and he wanted to make sure of this evening with the disciples. Not even they knew where it was to be. When the time came he gave two of them directions how to find the friend who was to be host, and how to make preparations for the meal (Mark 14. 10-16).

The Supper.—The Gospels differ in their report as to the nature of this meal. The Synoptic Gospels—that is, the first three—state that it was the Passover. The fourth Gospel makes clear that it was the day before the Passover. The latter is probably correct. Some have thought to reconcile the two accounts by the theory that our Lord, knowing the end at hand, had arranged to eat the Passover one day earlier. The question is interesting, but not important. What really counted that night was not any Jewish rite, but the words of our Lord concerning a better faith; it is not the old feast which they left behind that concerns us so much as the new covenant which he established.

A Last Opportunity.—To this last hour Jesus had looked forward with deepest longing (Luke 22. 15). How little these men yet knew, these upon whom so much depended! How much he had yet to tell them! And then there was his personal affection for them. They were his friends.

How often they had sat thus at table together in the old days; and how loyal these men had been through it all, not only in sunny Galilee, but in the wanderings to the north and in these last days of strife and peril.

An Example and a Warning

Washing the Disciples' Feet.—Three incidents are preserved for us from this evening. The first of these we owe to John's Gospel (John 13. 1-16). When they arrived there had been no servant present to remove their sandals and wash their feet, dusty from the walk. It was a part of hospitality as well as a requirement of cleanliness and comfort. None of these men who had so lately striven about place thought of taking this servant's task. So Jesus himself finds basin and water, lays aside his outer garments, binds a towel about him, and, clothed thus like a slave, takes up the humble task which they had scorned. The rebuke went deeper than words. Shame made them silent until Peter spoke out, for Peter could not bear the thought that his Lord should do this service for him. Then Jesus, taking his seat, enforced the unforgettable lesson which he had given them. The highest privilege in his kingdom is that of service. What he had done, they should do, to count it their calling to be the servants of all.

The Warning of the Betrayal.—Judas was the unenviable center of the second incident, Jesus' announcement of his betrayal (Mark 14. 18-21; John 13. 21-30). Jesus had not been ignorant of what had been going on in Judas' soul. He had read in his face the dissatisfaction that had grown into disloyalty, and that was now ready for betrayal. He had used every influence and made every appeal, but in vain. The others had been slow enough in learning, but at least they had remained loyal; this one was to betray him. The words that Jesus now spoke in sorrow may have been meant as a last appeal to Judas: "One of you shall betray me." Brought face to face with his intended deed and seeing that Jesus knew it, perhaps the betrayer might yet yield. But Judas made no response.

There was but one thing to do, to compel Judas to leave so that the sacred fellowship of that last hour might not be marred by his presence. Matthew tells us that Jesus pointed out Judas before them all (Matt. 26. 25). It seems more probable, as the fourth Gospel indicates, that Jesus spoke to Judas in such manner that only the latter understood. "What thou doest, do quickly," Jesus said. He then "went out straightway: and it was night."

The Parable of the Bread and the Wine

The Last Parable.—Judas had gone out and the supper was drawing to a close, when the third incident took place. How often in the days now past had these disciples listened to the matchless parables of the Master and learned the lessons of the Kingdom from the simple objects of the daily world about them! Now they were to have one last parable, a parable of both deed and word. In simplest manner, while they were finishing the meal, Jesus takes a loaf of bread, breaks it before their eyes, and gives them all to eat. "This is my body," he says of the bread. Then he hands them a cup of wine to drink, and when they have taken of it, he says: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." So Mark reports it (14. 22-25). Paul, writing even earlier than this, the oldest Gospel, adds these words of Jesus: "This do in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11. 23-25).

What It Meant.—Unnumbered times since then has this parable of the bread and wine been reenacted, in great cathedrals and in humble chapels, before reverent throngs or at the bedside of some dying saint. Often it has been surrounded with pomp and overlaid with ceremony, while the words were spoken in a tongue the people could not understand and the whole transformed into a priestly act of magical power. While Roman Catholicism has done this, Protestantism has sometimes tended to hide the meaning by its elaborate doctrines. Our first task here is not to discuss the doctrine of the Supper or of the Lord's death, but to tell what occurred, and to ask what Jesus meant

by it. In doing so, we shall follow the simpler and older accounts of Mark and Paul.

These words and this act of Jesus were first of all intended for the twelve. It was his last lesson to them, his last effort to prepare them for what was coming. Mark's account makes plain three things: (1) Jesus again foretells his death. His body is like this bread, about to be broken. His blood is to be poured out like this wine. They had heard, but hardly believed, when he told them just now that one of their own number should betray him; now he warns them again of his death.

(2) In some way his death is to be for them: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." He has said before that his life is to be given a ransom for many. He does not explain it further, nor have all the theologians since that day explained its full meaning. But the world of his followers since that day has seen in his death, in some manner, the holy love of God and the power of God saving the world from sin. This was not something that happened to Jesus, but something done by Jesus and done for them. The theories of the atonement have often been crude, but the experience has been wonderful and real.

(3) His death is to establish a new covenant. Their minds, filled with the thoughts of Passover week, were prepared for this comparison. As the blood of the first Passover marked the old covenant, so his blood was to seal a new covenant between God and man. The prophet Jeremiah had spoken long years before of such a covenant, in one of the noblest passages in the Old Testament (Jer. 31. 31-34), declaring how God should write his laws upon human hearts, and not upon tables of stone; how religion should be a life within, and not a rule without. Now Jesus asserts that the time of this new covenant is come and that his death shall seal its gift. In this moment, when he faces death, his faith triumphs again. What he sees is not a terrible end, but the beginning of a new age. And the world has counted its new age from that day.

Some Further Meanings.—Such was the meaning which

Jesus meant to convey to his disciples by his words and acts on that evening long ago. It is important that we go back of the theories and customs of to-day to this first simple message. We need not overlook, however, the wonderful lessons which the Supper, repeated as a memorial rite, has had for the church ever since. In this symbol of Christ's suffering and death men have seen the meaning of their sin and made it a time of confession. They have seen here God's great gift of forgiving love and made it a feast of solemn joy as well. It has been called the Holy Communion: a communion with Christ, not physical or magical, but a communion of the spirit, in which men have been filled with Christ's spirit of obedience and love and sacrifice. At the same time it has meant the communion of believers among themselves; an early Christian writer uses the figure of the loaf of bread in which the scattered grains of wheat are joined together.

Directions for Study

The Scripture passages: Mark 14. 1-25; (John 13. 1-30; 1 Cor. 11. 23-25).

Think of this chapter as marking a bit of peaceful road for the Master, lying between the conflicts past and the terrible day that waited.

The chapter deals with two suppers, the first being that at Bethany. What the woman did to Jesus and what Jesus said about the woman are the notable items. Read this chapter with Mark's account open before you. Try to think yourself into the circumstances so as to appreciate how Jesus felt about the anointing.

We hear a great deal of the *efficient* life. We must not forget the ideal of the *complete* life. What are some things needed for the complete life beside work and bread? Did Jesus appreciate this?

As to the Last Supper, read the passage in Mark and the reference in John. Now, as you read the discussion, note how carefully Jesus planned for this evening. What did it mean to him? Consider the three events connected with the evening: the washing of the feet, the warning about Judas' betrayal, and then the announcement of the new covenant through his death which we call the institution of the Lord's Supper.

What truths does the Lord's Supper set forth for us to-day? What practical lessons?

CHAPTER XXI

GETHSEMANE

We do not know how long Jesus and his friends talked together on that last night, but it must have been midnight or after when they finally went forth. Even yet the disciples did not realize what that last journey meant. But Jesus knew. Yonder were the plotting priests, with Judas telling where they might find him. Yet even now, with the blow about ready to fall, Jesus' thoughts were with the disciples. With one last warning he tried to prepare them against what was to come. Heavy of heart, he turned to them: You shall all stumble and fall to-night because of me. What the prophet has written is to be fulfilled: "Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" (Zech. 13. 7). But after I am raised, I will go before you into Galilee. As usual, Peter was first with his answer: Though all shall be offended, I will not. It was this Peter who needed the warning above others, and so Jesus turned solemnly to him: This very night shalt thou deny me, Peter, deny me three times before the cock crows twice. At that all began to protest, and so they went on their way, Jesus making no further answer.

The Meaning of the Garden

Why Jesus Stayed.—It was to the Mount of Olives that Jesus went, to a place where they had been accustomed to resort (Luke 22. 39), possibly a garden belonging to some friend. It is probable that they had been spending the last nights here, and Judas would know the place well. Why, then, did Jesus go there? Back of that lies the larger question: Why did he stay in Jerusalem? It was not too late to escape. The leaders would have been quite willing

to let him go. It was not his life they cared for; they wanted him out of the way. It would have suited them as well to have him flee the city, if he would give up his claims and forfeit his hold upon the people.

But Jesus did not think of flight. Long ago, in the wilderness yonder by the Jordan, he had fought his first great fight concerning his work. He had found his answer then, clear and definite: He was to obey and not choose, to serve and not to rule, and to trust his Father. A second great conflict had come to its crisis on the mount of transfiguration. He had realized there that obedience and service pointed to Jerusalem and death; but he set his face steadfastly to go that way. The third and last great conflict of his life was now come. He had made his last appeal. With all his power he had pleaded, warning and beseeching. He had failed. He had had a certain support from the people which had thus far thwarted his foes; there had even been some enthusiasm at the first. But he knew well enough that there had been no repentance, no real acceptance of his message. In all this he had followed his Father's will. He was taking no new way now, only the same road of obedience and service. Now, however, he saw that it was his Father's will for him to stay, to face betrayal and desertion and death. He had been serving men in life; in some way he was to render a last and greatest service by his death.

What He Sought.—Jesus went to the garden for prayer, just as he went to the wilderness in that first time of testing, and to the mountain in that second trial. He had done what he could for his disciples, even to the last moment; now he must face his own problem. He must gain certainty from above as to this course and strength from above to face it. The Christian disciple must ever be grateful to those first followers of Jesus for preserving in this frank and simple account the story of our Lord's prayer and struggle. Nothing in all the Gospels shows so well his kinship with us as this picture of his pleading, his need, and his utter dependence upon God. Nothing shows more clearly how he stands above us than this pic-

ture of his utter obedience and trust, of that strength and quiet of soul in which he rises from the struggle. Jesus was never more a king than in the moment when from out that garden he went forth to die.

The Conflict in the Garden

The Petition of Jesus.—Having arrived at the garden, Jesus took the three who were his intimates a little to one side. He told them of the burden that rested on his soul, a burden like that of death, and asked them to watch with him while he prayed. Then, withdrawing a little way, he began to pray. In the agony of his struggle he fell upon his face, as he cried, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt." What was the cup from which Jesus prayed deliverance? We need not search for some hidden mystery here. Jesus had looked forward to death; now he was facing it in all its terrible reality. And it was not simply the suffering and death. Despite the torture and ignominy of the cross that was the lesser part. There was the betrayal by one disciple and the desertion of the others. There was the cruel treachery of the leaders and the shameful indifference of the people, his own people. It was this sin of the people that rested heaviest upon his soul. And so he cries out, as any son might to the Father: Is there not some other way? If it be possible, let this cup pass away from me!

His Prayer of Victory.—But it is not the struggle and the petition that are most important here; it is the victory that Jesus won. For this prayer was no mere meditation or simple petition. It was a moral battle, such as prayer at its highest is wont to be, a conflict in which man rises to God by laying hold upon the hand of God. Out of that conflict Jesus came forth a conqueror, and his prayer points the way for all right prayer and for all victory. Trust, petition, surrender were the three steps. It began with a perfect trust: "Abba, Father," words that in themselves are prayer enough to voice all faith and desire.

Next he brought his petition, just as every child may bring to the Father his every interest and need. And then came the surrender, that trustful devotion to God which is the spirit of all true prayer and its sign of achievement. For the goal of prayer is not the winning of our desire, but rather this harmony with God in which his will becomes the deepest wish of our heart. Such a union with the Father's will had marked the whole course of Jesus' life; now he maintains it victoriously at the end. He comes out of the conflict seeing his death as the Father's will, and ready that that will should be done.

The Struggle.—The victory did not come without terrible struggle; again and again Jesus uttered his prayer. And his struggle was alone; the sleeping disciples could not give him the sympathy which he craved. The story of that hour has presumably come down to us through Peter, upon whom Mark's Gospel probably depends. Peter conceals nothing of the failure with which he and the others must often have reproached themselves in later days. But the strain of the week of excitement and danger in the great city had told upon these men of the open. They had seen the Master's agony of spirit. Three times he had spoken to them, bidding them watch with him. Listening each time, they had heard the first words of Jesus' prayer and then fallen asleep again. Now Jesus came to them for the last time. He had heard the approach of his foes and he called to his disciples: "Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough; the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

Betrayal and Arrest.—It was the company that had been sent out by the chief priests and scribes and elders to apprehend Jesus. Judas was at their head, and it marks the depths to which the man had fallen that he points out Jesus to these foes by walking up to him and giving him the wonted kiss of friendly salutation. It was a mixed company that came, probably hastily gathered at night, some bearing swords, others only staves. One of the disciples drew a sword (Peter, according to John 18. 10), but Jesus bade him put it up. To the men before him Jesus simply

said: I have been in the temple daily teaching; you might have taken me then. Why do you come out against me by night as if I were a robber? Then, without resistance, he followed them. As to the disciples, what Jesus had anticipated came to pass; they all fled, panic-stricken.

Judas

The Problem.—The story of Judas has been a problem to students and has called forth many theories and explanations. Some have viewed him as a misguided enthusiast, convinced that Jesus had miraculous power if he would only use it, thinking by his plot to compel Jesus to assert himself and seize kingly power. Others have painted him an utter villain, a monster so black that there seemed nothing human about him. Leaving these extremes, there are two questions which occur to us all: How could Jesus have taken such a man into the company of his intimate friends? And how could any man have resisted the influence of that fellowship and turned to such a deed?

The Men Whom Jesus Chose.—The answer to these questions brings us back to the method of Jesus. The twelve whom he chose were not saints; they were men in the making. The Gospels reveal their faults of character with perfect frankness. They quarreled with each other. Two of them wanted to call down fire from heaven upon a village that had refused hospitality to the company. They had selfish dreams about places of honor in Jesus' kingdom. In the hour of his danger the whole company deserted him and the foremost of them denied his Master with an oath. They were slow to understand Jesus' message and purpose. To the very last they could not see why Jesus should take the way of service and death when he might have honor and power.

And yet Jesus chose these men. They had responded to his message, though they had not understood it all. They were loyal to him personally. They wondered at his way, but they followed him. In the end they remained true despite the death of their Lord and the shame of the cross.

They had in them the making of leaders in the Kingdom, and that was the final reason for his choice. More and more he made their training his central concern, that they might carry forward what he had begun.

The Message Tested.—Jesus saw such possibilities in Judas himself, possibilities both of character and usefulness. The message of Jesus had stirred the best that was in him and he had followed. In a way he was one of the leaders of the circle. He was treasurer and steward for the company, arranging for necessary provisions and lodging. Judas had watched with wonder, like the rest, the Master's power to heal. He knew that Jesus could command the following of the mass of the people if he would. But Jesus would not choose that way. Instead he talked strangely of coming as a servant, and his speech of the Kingdom had nothing about thrones or victory over Israel's enemies, but about righteousness and being merciful and becoming like a child. And then came those days in the north, when Jesus owned himself at last as Messiah, but at the same time declared that he was to go to Jerusalem and be refused by the people and finally taken prisoner and put to death.

The Failure of Judas.—We have seen the disciples protesting, but nevertheless following Jesus to Jerusalem. Why Judas remained in the company is not clear. In any case, as the end grew nearer, the inner revolt of Judas became more complete. He had not followed Jesus for any such end as this: a Messiah helpless before his foes, a King that would not use his power or strike a blow! It may have been that Judas's covetousness entered in, but probably this was quite incidental: thirty pieces of silver were a petty reward. Anger and disappointment were probably stronger reasons. His feeling was in part like that of the mob which cried out, "Crucify!" He had convinced himself that Jesus' claim was false; the man who went thus to death could not be the Messiah.

The End.—There are two accounts of the end of Judas. According to the one he hung himself in remorse for his deed (Matt. 27. 3-10). According to the other, he was

killed by an accident (Acts 1. 18). It is but fair to conclude from Matthew's account, that Judas realized his awful error as well as his sin. It may have been that he followed and watched Jesus at the trial, that he gained some new vision of the Master, and saw at length beyond all doubt that he whom he had betrayed was the Messiah. No man can sink so deep in life that there may not be forgiveness for his penitence. But there are consequences of sin that are irrevocable.

"The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it."

Directions for Study

The Scripture passages: Mark 14: 32-52; Matthew 27. 3-10; Acts 1. 18-20.

Recall the events of the evening as discussed in the last lesson: the Master's plan for the last evening, the washing of the feet, the warning as to the betrayal, the Supper and its message.

Read carefully the passage in Mark (14. 32-42) telling of the Master's struggle and agony, and the discussion upon this passage. The best preparation for this study will be a spirit of deep and humble reverence. Let us not try to understand all the Master's experience, but let us be sure to take for ourselves the lesson of the meaning and need of prayer. If he needed to pray thus, what of us?

Concerning Judas, the references given tell us in reality very little. As you read these passages and the discussion, recall the experience of Judas as a whole. Three facts are plain: His great privilege as one of the twelve, his betrayal of Jesus, and his final repentance of that deed.

What is your conception of prayer and its purpose?

Read 1 Corinthians 9. 26, 27; Philippians 3. 12-14, and consider the character of the man who wrote them.

CHAPTER XXII

THE TRIAL

It is hard to realize the swift change that came with the arrest of Jesus. It had been a day of quiet for the Master and his friends, followed by the supper with its hours of retirement and fellowship free from interruption, and then by the lonely silence of the slope of Olivet outside the city walls. Now came the crowd, the lights, the arrest, and after that the events followed quickly. The arrest was probably not far from midnight; it could not have been much before that, and it may have been later. According to Mark 15. 25, the crucifixion took place at nine in the morning. The arrest, the various hearings and trials, the mockings and scourging, the sentence, the crucifixion—all this was crowded into the space of less than ten hours.

The Plan of the Sanhedrin

Their Need of Haste.—As we study the trial of Jesus, the purpose of the Sanhedrin is perfectly clear. They were not concerned about investigating Jesus' innocence or guilt. In their minds he was condemned already. Of course, they must observe the proper legal forms, otherwise sentiment might be aroused against them. But the main thing was to secure a judgment and execution at once. To hold Jesus prisoner during the feast would be dangerous. They were not sure of the attitude of the people, who had given a certain support to Jesus; a popular movement in his favor was quite possible, especially if the cry were raised that he was the Messiah. If he were to be executed before the feast, it would require the quickest action; for it was late Thursday night that Judas came to them, and the Passover began with sunset on Friday.

The Hostility of the Scribes.—The reasons are not far to seek why these leaders were determined to be rid of

Jesus. First of all, he had alienated the powerful scribes and Pharisees, beginning with his ministry in Galilee. They were the religious leaders, the models of piety on the one hand, and on the other the unquestioned authority as regards the whole system of laws and rules which were the religion of the day. Jesus had flouted their laws in his own practice, healing on the Sabbath, neglecting their washings, associating with sinners. He had attacked their system of rules, asserting the religion of the inner spirit instead. He had denounced them by name.

Of the Priests.—The enmity of the priestly party was quite as bitter and more dangerous, for they held the reins of authority in Jerusalem and formed a majority of the Sanhedrin. The priestly-Sadducaic party cared little for the attacks on the Pharisees, who were their enemies, and still less for quarrels about Sabbaths and washings. But they too had been denounced before the people. They had been compelled to stand by while Jesus and his disciples destroyed their property and threw their profitable business out of the temple. In such parables as that of the vineyard he had accused them and declared that their rule was to be taken away. And the crowds had listened and upheld him, not simply in Galilee, but also here at Jerusalem.

The Disciples.—They did not concern themselves about the disciples. They had expected some resistance, and were no doubt surprised that Jesus yielded without a struggle and his followers all fled. The disciples, of course, knew that their Master was in danger, and Peter's sword would indicate that they themselves had made some preparation. Dazed by the sudden awakening from deepest sleep, seeing one of their number leading the foes, rebuked when one of them attempted violent resistance, and noting the quiet surrender of their leader, it is perhaps no wonder that they fled.

The Trials Before the Sanhedrin

The First Hearing.—It was still night when Jesus was seized, though the full paschal moon was shining. There

could be no regular trial or condemnation until daybreak, but his enemies would not wait for that. John tells us that Jesus was first taken to the house of Annas, father-in-law of the high priest Caiaphas. Annas was the real leader of the priestly party, had formerly been high priest himself, and was still known by that name (John 18. 13). Here an informal hearing was held in which everything was decided except in name. Long before this they had agreed that Jesus should be put to death; their real problem was to find a charge that they could set up before the people. His attacks upon the priests and Pharisees were no basis for a trial; but the temple was the pride of the people, and Jesus' words about this might be used. The prophet Jeremiah in his day had almost been slain for speaking against the city and the temple in the same way (Jer. 26. 8-12). And so they charge him with declaring that he would destroy the temple. At least two witnesses were required to condemn a man, but the witnesses that were produced failed to agree (Mark 14. 53-59).

The High Priest's Question.—To all the charges of the witnesses Jesus answered nothing. His fate was determined; these men did not want the truth, and he had no desire for idle dispute. Now the high priest himself approached him: "Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?" To this also Jesus made no answer. Then came the question for which he broke his silence. These shrewd leaders knew that Jesus held himself to be the Messiah. They had read his assertion of this in his triumphal entry and in his parables. And yet, as we have seen, Jesus had not asserted the claim in so many words, and thus they could not call witnesses upon this point. That is why the high priest turns now upon Jesus with the direct question: "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

The Answer of Jesus.—There was profound contempt in the query, a mockery like that under the cross a few hours later when they cried, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself." Despite the scorn, Jesus answered the question. Once he would

not assert the name because he feared the crowds would try to acclaim him as an earthly king. There was no danger of that now. To refuse that title now, even by silence, would be to be faithless to his Father and to his own conviction. And so, in this hour of his humiliation, he asserts that which he would not claim in the hour of his popularity: "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." It was a sublime triumph of faith; deserted, helpless, facing certain death, Jesus sees the sure victory that lies before him (Mark 14. 60-64).

The Verdict.—At the reply of Jesus the high priest tore his robe and cried out in horror: "What further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy." We need not charge the high priest with mere acting. It is true that the claim to be the Messiah was in itself not blasphemy. This claim had been asserted by others. But that this man here before them, this prisoner, bound, helpless, this man who had defied the laws and joined himself to sinners and threatened the temple, that such an one should claim to be the Messiah of Jehovah was in their eyes blasphemous. It was joining the holy God to that which was unholy and unrighteous. And so "they all condemned him to be worthy of death."

The Formal Conviction.—This examination at the home of Annas was probably conducted by Annas himself. It was not a legal meeting of the Sanhedrin and was official in no sense. But what this shrewd and powerful man determined upon would carry with that body, not a few members of which had undoubtedly been present at this early meeting. And so it was. At the earliest moment of dawn the Sanhedrin assembled, and agreed to the charge and the verdict based upon it (Mark 15. 1).

Peter's Denial

Peter Denies His Lord.—Meanwhile another scene was being enacted near by (Mark 14. 66-72). One of the twelve, and possibly two (see John 18. 15), had followed Jesus and his captors from afar and so found themselves

at length in the courtyard of the high priest's palace. It may be that the maidservant who noticed Peter had seen him at some time with Jesus; at any rate she charged him with being one of Jesus' company. Driven by fear, Peter hastily declared that he did not know what she was talking about, and then slipped out "in the porch." There the maid later on found him again, and suggested to those standing by, "This is one of them." This Peter denied again, though he still remained. But the bystanders had noticed the Galilæan accent as he spoke, and they returned to the charge: "Thou art *one* of them, for thou art a Galilæan. But he began to curse and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak. And straightway the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word, how that Jesus had said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept."

Peter's Sin.—It is easy to condemn Peter, who had protested so bravely a little while before, and who denied now so cravenly at the charge of a mere housemaid. It is only fair to remember, however, that Peter did make his way to the house of the high priest despite the danger, and that he remained there even after he was detected. Peter's denial, however, was not something that stood all alone. Sin is never a single deed. The single evil act is part of a stream of life; it is born of other deeds and thoughts, and it gives birth to still others in turn. Peter's sin was due in large part to that overconfidence which Jesus had rebuked but a little while before. The lesson of humility and dependence was not an easy one for Peter. On the other hand, that first hesitating denial prepared the way for what was worse.

The Trials Before Pilate and Herod

The Charge Made Before Pilate.—With the end of the Sanhedrin trial the task of Jesus' enemies was only begun. Some years before Rome had taken direct control in Jerusalem and put a procurator in charge. Since then the Sanhedrin had no authority to inflict the death penalty.

It is true that later on in the case of Stephen they took the matter into their own hands and put Stephen to death by stoning as their own law provided (Lev. 24. 16). But, aside from possible trouble through such lawlessness, their position would be much more secure with the people if the Romans themselves executed Jesus. Their task, therefore, was to find a charge that would stand before Pilate. The Roman would pay little attention to their accusations of blasphemy based on any such grounds. But his claim to be the Messiah might easily be used against him, if they could make it appear that this involved in some way an attack upon the Roman rule. So they framed their charge that Jesus claimed to be king of the Jews and that he had stirred up the people everywhere.

The Position of Pilate.—Nothing, in fact, was farther from the real aim and spirit of Jesus than this, and Pilate, who knew these men, saw through it quickly enough. But he knew too the fanatical spirit with which he had to deal, and the possibilities of serious trouble. Had he decided according to conviction, he would have released Jesus at once. But Pilate was afraid. His course throughout the trial is that of a man who wants to do the right, but follows expediency, who shows a lofty contempt for the Jews, and yet yields to their will. In the great scenes of that last week the figure of Judas is the most tragic, the figure of Annas is the most sinister, but the most pitiable figure, with all its show of authority and proud contempt, is that of the Roman who proved to be a coward.

Jesus Sent to Herod.—Pilate begins by questioning Jesus (Mark 15. 2-5). "Art thou the King of the Jews?" he asks. It was probably spoken with a good-natured contempt, which thought of Jesus as a harmless enthusiast sprung from this strange people. Again Jesus will not deny his Messiahship. "Thou sayest," is his reply. But to all other questions from Pilate he gives no answer. In making the charges against Jesus they had referred to his teaching in Galilee, and Pilate now grasps at the word. If this man is a Galilæan, then he belongs to Herod Antipas. Herod happens to be in Jerusalem at the very

time; he will send Jesus over and thus be well rid of the matter. The priests probably chafed under the delay, but they had no good reason for protest.

Before Herod Antipas.—And so Jesus stands at last before Herod Antipas, crafty and cruel Herod, rightly described as "that fox" by Jesus' scornful word. Herod, it was said, had wanted to seize Jesus. In any case he had long been curious about this prophet, so much like that John whom he had put to death. He had heard of his wonders; now he would have him perform some miracles for him. He begins to question Jesus. His shallow curiosity deserved no answer, and Jesus gave none. And before the fierce and persistent accusations of the priests he was also silent. Herod took his cheap revenge of mockery, put on this "king" in ridicule a gorgeous royal robe, and then sent him back to Pilate (Luke 23. 6-12).

Pilate's Offer of Compromise.—Pilate now had a clear case for the release of Jesus, and he set it before the representatives of the Sanhedrin: "I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod: for he sent him back unto me." Seeing them still obdurate, however, he offered them a compromise. It was the brutal Roman custom to scourge criminals before execution. The scourge was made of leather thongs weighted with sharp pieces of lead or bone. The ordeal was only less terrible than the execution itself, and victims had been known to die under it. Now Herod proposed that Jesus should be thus scourged and then let go. That surely should satisfy Jesus' foes, while at the same time it would relieve Pilate from imposing a sentence that he knew to be unjust. But the cruel Roman was less cruel than these Jews (Luke 23. 13-16).

Pilate Proposes to Release Jesus.—Then Pilate made a third and last attempt (Mark 15. 6-15). It was customary, we are told, for the Jews to ask for the release of some prisoner each year as a special privilege in honor of the great feast. Matthew tells us that it was Pilate himself who now raised the question (Mark says the people);

in any case it was Pilate who suggested the release of Jesus. Pilate knew better than to propose this to the leaders; he put it directly to the people, counting upon their sympathy with the accused. So far as we know, there had been no hostility to Jesus among the people during the week. Some of the many pilgrims that filled the city had joined with Jesus' followers in shouting "Hosanna!" at his entrance into the city. They had heard his attacks upon the leaders and watched him drive the traders from the temple. Their sympathy and support had kept Jesus' foes from overt action. The way seemed clear for release.

The Verdict of the Mob.—But the situation had changed. The priests and scribes had seen to it that there were enough of their party present, and these now mingled with the crowd suggesting that they call for the release of Barabbas. There was not much argument needed. What the people wanted was a leader with power, a real king who could lead against Rome. They had no interest in a "Messiah" who could not even defend himself, a helpless prisoner about to be sentenced. And then the heart of the mob is often as cowardly and cruel as it is stupid. Whether Barabbas was a common criminal or had been the leader in some petty popular revolt, we do not know. He was at least well known, "a notable prisoner," and under sentence for murder. Then Pilate made one more effort. If they desired it, he intimated, he would release Jesus in any case: "What then shall I do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?" Then at last the cries from the crowd became a chorus as they shouted, "Crucify, crucify him!" In memory of Pilate's cowardly yielding to the mob, still week by week, all round the Christian world, where men confess their faith in Him who died for them, they repeat those words, the ancient monument of the procurator's shame: "suffered under Pontius Pilate."

The Attitude of Jesus.—Nowhere do the completeness and divineness of Jesus' character appear more wonderful than in these hours of his humiliation. The Christian Church has been perhaps most impressed by his meekness, seeing here a wonderful fulfillment of the pic-

ture drawn by the prophet: "He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth" (Isa. 53. 7). And yet his meekness is not weakness. Men usually feel that they must become angry and strike back in order to preserve their honor and self-respect in the face of insult and injury. But as we watch Jesus, suffering and yet silent, it is his foes that lose their honor and our respect; his strength and dignity shine before our eyes. Such strength of character, such kingliness, the world has never seen. As we watch the trial, the helpless prisoner becomes the judge before our eyes. We see the other actors in these scenes arraigned before him. His silent sentence condemns in turn the treachery of a Judas who could answer such love with betrayal, the weakness of a Peter, the cowardice of a Pilate, the shallow fickleness of the mob, and the malice of his foes pursuing one who had never done aught but love and serve.

Directions for Study

The Scripture passages: Mark 14. 53-72; 15. 1-15; Luke 23. 1-25.

Recall first the events of the preceding evening and of the night struggle in the garden. Only so can we at all understand the flight of the disciples.

The plan of the Sanhedrin: Read this section and recall the previous chapters on the cleansing of the temple and Jesus' conflicts during the last week.

Peter's denial: Recall the stories of Peter's impulsiveness and self-confidence.

The trials before Pilate and Herod: Read the discussion above with constant reference to the Scripture passages. If possible, read the account in John after you have finished your other study.

The Gospels differ somewhat in their account of these events. The probable order is given above. Compare the Gospels and note that there are reported six stages in the trial of Jesus, the first four being hearings, the last two being the offer of release and the sentence. Outline the events under these six heads.

Put in a few words the character and the fault of these men who sinned against Jesus: Peter, Judas, Annas, Herod, Pilate. Who seems to you most blameworthy, and why?

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CRUCIFIXION

It is hard for us, as we study this lesson, to grasp the swift and terrible changes which a few days, and even a few hours, have brought. The triumphal way has changed to the *via dolorosa,* way of sorrow. The applauding multitude has given way to this crowd with its cry of "Crucify." The priests and scribes, baffled and helpless then, are now exulting in their triumph. And He upon whose words the people hung, who held these powerful leaders at bay, is prisoner now and condemned. It is hard for us to realize the scenes of that Friday morning, that all this befell Him whom we venerate as highest and holiest. Harder still is it for us to think that all this indignity and cruelty and shame fell upon One whose life had no spring but love, and no task but to minister to others. We can but say with him, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22. 53).

The Mocking and Scourging

At the House of the High Priest.—The records speak of three mockings of Jesus that took place on that morning. The first came from his Jewish enemies. We sometimes say of a good man, "He never made an enemy." Happy is the man of whom this can be said; but many of the world's best men have had to make foes. Such was the lot of Jesus. He had drawn no sword, but he had been a mighty fighter. His flaming wrath had flashed out against all oppression of the poor, against blind leaders that turned men astray, against cruelty and corruption and hypocrisy. He had made enemies, bitter and ruthless; and this was their hour. They mocked him there at the high priest's house, in the early hours before dawn had come.

They spat upon his face in scorn and beat him. Then they blindfolded this "prophet," while one and another stepped up and struck him with the hand. And each time they called out in mockery, "Prophesy: who is he that struck thee?" (Mark 14. 65; Luke 22. 63, 64.)

With Herod Antipas.—Luke gives a second mocking at the hands of Herod Antipas and his soldiers. Possibly this was the same event that Matthew and Mark report in connection with Pilate's soldiery. Terrible as the latter was, in its spirit it was not so bad as that which Jesus had suffered at the high priest's palace. With the priests it was malice and anger, with the soldiers it was rather brutality and ignorance. Their calling was one that helped to make brutal men more brutal still.

The Scourging.—First of all Jesus was scourged. The cruelty of this punishment belonged in part to the age, in part to the Roman character. The victim was tied to a post. The pieces of sharp metal and bone, with which the thongs were weighted, pierced the skin at every blow. And the will of the officer was the only limit to the number of blows. It was very different from the Jewish scourging with the rod to which Paul refers. Sometimes it was used to draw forth confessions or unwilling testimony. Commonly, with the unmeaning cruelty of the time, it was applied to those who were about to be executed. Under it the victim commonly fainted; sometimes he died before the still more terrible penalty of the cross could be imposed. It was not to be so with Jesus.

Mocked by Pilate's Soldiers.—By the time the scourging was over, the soldiers of the band were all assembled. They received the weak and bleeding victim with jeers. This man had called himself a king, this poor peasant, this broken creature waiting for the cross! So they mocked. It was too good an opportunity for idle buffoonery. They would have a crowning for this king! So they found a robe, or rag, of scarlet and flung it about him. Some thorny branches were twisted together to make a crown, and a reed was given to him as scepter. Then in mock obeisance they knelt before him and cried, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Tiring of this, they spat upon him and struck him, until the time came to lead him forth.

The Way of the Cross

The Procession.—The place of crucifixion was without the city, just where we do not know. We know it was a skull-shaped mound called Golgotha, or Calvary, and the more common opinion to-day holds that it lay just outside the Damascus gate. Toward this gate, then, the procession moved. Despite the haste of the priests and the still early hour, the report of what was happening had spread through the city. The crowd that had been in front of Pilate's palace was reinforced by many others as they followed the little company of soldiers that led the way to the place of execution. Hanging from the prisoner's neck, or carried before him, was a sign which bore the charge upon which he was condemned. The accusation against Jesus was brief: "The King of the Jews"; and this sign was placed above his cross at the crucifixion. In John 19. 19-22 we read that this was done by Pilate's special order, and was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. It spoke Pilate's contempt for the Jews, and was a piece of petty revenge against these men whose fierce determination had compelled him to act against his knowledge of the right.

Simon Carries the Cross.—It was customary to make the prisoner carry his own cross to the place of execution, that is, "to take up his cross." This Jesus was physically unable to do. When we think of the strain of that terrible week, under whose fatigue the disciples were utterly unable to keep awake though they knew of their danger and the Master's desire; when we think of how he added the night watches of prayer to the days of severest toil that had gone before, and how this was followed by trials and hearings and mockings and scourging, we marvel that he had endured to this hour. Jesus must have been a man of exceptional physical power. But now the limit had been reached; bear the cross he could not. The soldiers seized

a passer-by and compelled him to carry it. It was one Simon from Cyrene, a place in northern Africa which had a considerable Jewish colony. From the gospel reference it would seem that he became with his family a disciple of the Master.

Bewailing Women.—In the crowd that went along not all were hostile. There were women who bewailed his fate, Luke tells us (23. 26-31), not merely the women who had come down with him from the north, but women from Jerusalem. And still, as before, even in his weakness and suffering, the thought of Jesus was for others, not for himself. They were bewailing his fate, he was thinking of the lot that awaited the city. The glory of a Jewish woman was her children, and to be childless was the greatest calamity. Remembering this, we can understand Jesus' words to these women. Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children, he said. For the days were coming when men should say, Blessed are those women who never bore children; when men should call upon the mountains to bury them. "If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" History answers Jesus' question by telling us of the endless crosses reared by the soldiers of Titus, upon which the women of Jerusalem could see their sons and husbands hung. So it happened when the flourishing green of Jerusalem had become withered and dry.

The Crucifixion

It is neither needful nor profitable for us to picture the details of the physical suffering that followed. Men have discussed what form of cross was used, and whether the feet were bound to the cross or nailed like the hands. It is enough for us to read the simple story of the evangelists, and to feel its moving power. The cross had not been known among the Jews until Rome brought it in. Cruelty could not devise a more terrible form of execution. There was no injury of such character as to bring about death directly or speedily, and the victims sometimes endured

the agonies for a space of two days. There were merciful souls who sometimes went to the place of crucifixion and offered to the condemned a drink of wine and myrrh before they were affixed to the cross. The drink was stupefying and lessened the pain. Such a drink was offered to Jesus, but he refused; he wanted all his faculties of soul for that which lay before him.

What Jesus Saw from the Cross

In thinking of the crucifixion we have naturally turned first to the cross and to him who hung upon it. We need now to turn to those who stood about it. What did Jesus see that day as he looked down from the cross? The seat of execution was usually placed by the Romans near a highway or public place, that the terrible sight might serve to deter other men from crime. Thus there were many that passed by where Jesus hung, besides the throng that had come out with him. In this company there are four classes which the Gospel stories point out.

Jewish Foes.—First of all there were those who mocked, Jews passing by, but especially the priests and scribes. With jeers and taunts they derided him, reminding him of the claims that he had made. "Ha! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross." "He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross and we will believe on him. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God" (Mark 15. 29, 30; Matt. 27. 42, 43). They little realized how much both of truth and error lay in their words. It was just because he trusted in God that Jesus went to the cross; it was because he was saving others that he could not save himself.

The Soldiers.—The soldiers on guard formed a second group. It was a small detachment whose task it was to fix the condemned on the cross and then to wait until they were dead. It was their business, and they took it with

accustomed indifference. The garments of the prisoners were their poor spoils, and they divided them by casting lots. If this seems terrible to us in its brutality, what shall we say to the fact that millions of men in the year of our Lord 1917 are making it their business to kill as many as possible of their fellow men? Hardened though they were, the soldiers were not heartless, for one of them, hearing Jesus cry out, took from their own store of sour wine, or vinegar, and gave it to Jesus to drink. And of the centurion in charge it is said that when he saw how Jesus died, he declared, "Truly this was the Son of God."

Bystanders and Friends.—The third class was composed of the idle, indifferent throng. Of these Luke simply says, "The people stood beholding." The fourth class was composed of the friends of Jesus. The twelve had scattered, though the fourth Gospel states that John was present. But there were other disciples or friends of Jesus there. There is definite mention of the women; these, who had followed him from Galilee, did not desert him at the cross. Neither the shame of his death nor possible danger to themselves served to keep them away. The fourth Gospel states that several of these stood near the cross, and John with them. The other Gospels speak of them as looking on from afar; it is possible that they drew nearer toward the close. Some faces that Jesus saw, looking out from his cross, were full of sympathy and love, though they stood helpless in their sorrow.

What Jesus Said from the Cross

Seven Words.—Full of deepest interest to the Christian is the study of the words of Jesus spoken from the cross. Seven such words are reported in the Gospels: two that were spoken to others, two as if to himself, and three in prayer to his Father. As we study them we see that here, in this hour of awful trial, Jesus remained true to that spirit which had ruled him all his life: there is the same loving thought of others, there is the same steadfast and obedient trust in his Father.

Love and Trust on the Cross.—Of the two words spoken to others, one was to the penitent thief: "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23. 43). The second is given in John 19. 26, 27: "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own *home.*" John also reports the two words that seem to have been spoken by Jesus to himself (19. 28, 30). One lays hold of our hearts by its simple expression of human suffering: "I thirst." The other is equally moving as it reveals how Jesus to the last moment was concerned to finish the work that his Father had given him to do. This may have been his last word: "It is finished." And finally we have the words spoken in prayer to his Father. The first is a word that only infinite love could have spoken out of such anguish: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23. 34). Then there is a word of perfect trust, the same trust that all his life had sustained him: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23. 46).

The Word from the Psalm.—But there is one word spoken to his Father that seems to contradict what has been said of the spirit of trust which did not forsake him even in this hour. The word is a prayer, and a quotation from the Twenty-second Psalm. It is the only one of the seven words reported by more than one Gospel: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15. 34). If we believe in that Father-God whom Jesus revealed, then we cannot think that he deserted Jesus in the hour of his deepest need and his divinest obedience. Was there, then, a moment of darkness in which, under awful strain, Jesus for a time lost that sure faith? The question is answered if we look more closely. We have seen how Jesus turned to the words of the Scriptures in the great crises. At the temptation it was the book of Deuteronomy especially. When the prospect of suffering and death faced him, he turned, as we have seen, to the second part of Isaiah. In

this last hour he sustained his spirit with the words of the psalmist. But we may rightly assume that it was the psalm as a whole that was in Jesus' thought, and not simply the first words here reported which perhaps alone were heard. If we read the whole psalm we shall find, indeed, a cry of distress, spoken by a saint beset by his foes; but there is also a song of trust. It expressed in that hour the deep sorrow of Jesus, but it set forth also his victorious faith.

"Our fathers trusted in thee:
They trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
They cried unto thee, and were delivered:
They trusted in thee, and were not put to shame" (Psalm 22. 4, 5).

The most terrible feature of the crucifixion was the length of time before death relieved the sufferer of his agony. Sometimes it lasted several days. With Jesus it was a matter of hours. In mid-afternoon, with a loud cry that betokened strength still left, there came the end.

Directions for Study

The Scripture passage: Mark 15. 15-41. Note also Luke 22. 63, 64; 23. 11, 26-31; John 19. 17-30.

Recall again the swift succession of events, beginning with the quiet supper in the upper room the night before.

Read the simple story as given by Mark. Read it slowly and thoughtfully, letting the picture rise before you.

Read next the narrative, keeping the Scripture passages before you. Here, as elsewhere, the most valuable help is Huck's Synopsis of the First Three Gospels, or the Harmony of the Gospels, by Stevens and Burton, which print the various Gospel stories side by side. The heart of this lesson is its revelation of the Spirit of our Master. His words on the way to the cross and from the cross may well be our chief study.

Set forth in turn your answer to these questions: What did Jesus suffer on the cross? What did he see from the cross? What did he say?

Consider what the cross of Christ has meant in the Christian faith: (1) as a revelation of God, (2) as an inspiration for life, (3) as a power reconciling men to God.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE RISEN CHRIST

We have finished the story of Jesus' life and work. We have seen that his death counted for more than any deed wrought during his life. We have seen how large space the Gospels give to these last days of his passion, how the reports become full and detailed which had been but fragments before; the last week was the crown and consummation of his life. And yet even this last week does not complete the story. All this does not yet account for the early church and for Christianity. If we stopped with the cross and then began with the church, we should have an insoluble puzzle. We have still to consider the story of the resurrection. The cross is the center of apostolic preaching, but it is not the cross of a dead hero, but of a living Saviour. It is a living Christ that fills the pages of Paul, and not the mere memory of a past, however glorious. And that is true of those others that knew Jesus in the flesh. They remembered lovingly and they studied earnestly the story of Jesus of Nazareth; they preserved for us the record of his gracious words and wonderful deeds. But all the time, in the midst of these stories of humble service and shameful death, they are looking forward and thinking, "This is our living Lord." Strictly the story of these appearances of the risen Christ and of the faith they awakened belongs to the history of the early church. We need, however, to include them here also in order to set forth the full fact of Christ in its meaning for the development of the kingdom of God upon earth.

From Despair to Confidence

Apparent Failure.—There is no chapter in Christianity more interesting than that which tells of the great change

that took place in the days that followed the death of Jesus. What was there to show for his work in that dark hour of the cross when Jesus cried, "It is finished"? We should have seen but little had we stood there that day. We have seen how Jesus centered his work more and more upon the twelve. He had tried to show them two things: first, the nature of the Kingdom; second, the nature of his own work as one of service and suffering that was to end on the cross. Jesus had failed to win the nation; he had succeeded only in part with the twelve. The dream of earthly power and glory had lingered till the end. They could not grasp the fact or the meaning of his death. They realized that there was danger, and they had two swords with them on the night of the arrest; but they had expected no such end. When Jesus was seized they fled. Most of them remained in hiding. They were overwhelmed and apparently without hope. Jesus was just then a glorious and precious memory, but that was all: "We hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel."

The Change.—Then came the change. These fearful men come out of their hiding and stand forth boldly in the very presence of those who slew their Master. Their despondency has given place to a joy such as they had not known even in the days that Jesus was with them. They have a message and cannot be silent, a hope that fills them with confident rejoicing, a courage that nothing can shake. And all this stands the test of time; it is not the enthusiasm of a moment. Persecution does not abate it, the years do not lessen it. It becomes a new movement of life and power. It spreads through the Roman world. It lives on when at length the old Roman empire passes, until at last it comes to our own day. Only one thing can explain all this: the disciples knew beyond a doubt that Jesus lived, that his death was not a defeat, and that his final victory was sure.

The Gospel Records

Some Discrepancies.—When we turn to the Gospel records, we meet at once some perplexing questions. The

Gospel stories do not agree in various points. Take the visit of the women to the tomb. Was it Mary Magdalene alone (John 20. 1), the two Marys (Matt. 28. 1), the two Marys and Salome (Mark 16. 1), or a still larger number (Luke 24. 10)? When was this visit made, and for what purpose? Did they see one angel or two? Where did they see the angel, and what did the women do? Other differences appear as we compare the further stories.

The Fundamental Agreement.—In times past scholars tried to reconcile all these differences, believing that any error of any kind must make the whole Bible untrustworthy. We do not think so now. These records were composed a generation or more after the event. The writers have preserved for us the accounts current at the time of their writing. What we are concerned about is to know whether they agree in the central facts. And here there is no difference. The tomb is empty. The Lord appears to his disciples: to Peter, to the twelve, to the women. It is no mere vision, but a real appearance; Jesus speaks to them. And yet all agree that it is no return to the old life of physical intercourse.

Stories of the Resurrection and the Appearances

Mark's Story: The Interment.—Keeping in mind that we cannot lay too much stress upon details, we turn to some of the resurrection stories, and first to that of Mark. The death of Jesus was on Friday afternoon, and little time was left to care for the body, since sunset brought the Sabbath. The disciples, fearful and scattered, could be of no service now. In this emergency Joseph of Arimathæa comes forward. A member of the Sanhedrin, he had nevertheless sympathized with Jesus, and was probably present at Jesus' death. Hurrying to Pilate, fearing neither danger from the governor nor the hatred of his associates, he asks for the body of Jesus. In a new tomb, hewn out of the rock and situated in a garden near by, he gives it honorable burial.

The Women.—Very early on the morning after the Sab-

bath, Mark tells us, the women came to the tomb to anoint the body. The body had been in the tomb but a little over a day and a half, although it was the third day according to the Jewish mode of counting. They had no thought but that they should find the body, their only question being as to who should roll away the stone that was before the tomb. There is no suggestion in Mark that a Roman watch was present. Arrived at the tomb, they saw it open. Within was no body, but instead a young man robed in white, who said, "He is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him;" and; "tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." Thereupon they fled in fear and astonishment, but said nothing to anyone. Such is Mark's story (Mark 15. 42-47; 16. 1-8).

Luke: the Walk to Emmaus.—One of the most beautiful of this group of stories is that of the walk to Emmaus, found in Luke alone and told in Luke's matchless fashion. It is a picture of the mood of the disciples after Jesus' death: their sorrow over the friend that is gone, the thought of great hopes now shattered, and then the memory of the wonderful days to which they turn back again and again. Cleopas and another disciple, neither of them being of the twelve, are joined on their way to Emmaus by a stranger. As they pour out their hearts, their companion points out to them from the Scriptures how it was needful for the Christ to suffer all these things. It is a picture not only of the first discouragement, but of what the disciples began at once to do as soon as they knew that Jesus lived: to study the Old Testament and to recall words of Jesus but half understood before, all pointing to this way of suffering and death (Luke 24. 13-31).

The Easter Faith

The Easter faith is the faith in the living Christ. We cannot set forth its full meaning in a few words, for it is at the heart of all Christian believing. The Easter faith means, first of all, that Jesus was the one sent of God.

It is God's voice saying to men, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." We read Jesus' words and say, "This is God's word to us." We look at Jesus' life and say, "This is God showing us what we should be." We hear his words of invitation and his promise of mercy and life, and we do not say, "How beautiful if it were only true!" We say, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

The Easter faith gives to the cross its real meaning. Without Easter day the cross would have been a tragedy, for our day a long-forgotten one. At most men might have said, "How wonderfully this Jesus of Nazareth loved, and with what courage he died." Now, though the blackness of man's sin still remains in that awful deed, the cross itself has become the center of light. We see in it the plan and purpose of God, the glory of his righteousness, the wonder of his love. It is this faith that makes the cross the sign in which we conquer.

The Easter faith means that Christ through the Holy Spirit is a power in this world to-day, a living presence and not a mere memory. It was this thought that stirred Luther in one of the darkest hours of the Reformation, when he seized a crayon and wrote all over floor and wainscoting of that room which is shown still to-day: *Dominus vivit! Dominus vivit!* (The Lord liveth! the Lord liveth!)

The Easter faith is the assurance of the triumph of Christ. That was the conviction that filled with joy the hearts of those first disciples. True, their hope was not fulfilled as they expected, for they supposed he would come visibly and in their lifetime. But the manner in which his rule shall come is secondary, and men differ about it still. The heart of our faith is this: Christ is the revelation of God's purpose for the world, and some time the spirit of Christ shall rule all the life of men. We rejoice to-day that his rule has been growing through the ages.

And finally, the living Christ means that we who trust in him shall live with him. The Christian argument for immortality is not taken from science or philosophy, much less from supposed spirit messages from another world. We believe in immortality because we believe in Christ,

and in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who raised him from the dead. If the God of heaven and earth be such an one as Jesus showed men, then we may confidently say: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?"

Directions for Study

Read 1 Corinthians 15. 3-8; Mark 15. 42-47; 16. 1-8; Luke 24. 13-31; Acts 1. 1-11.

Consider first the change with the disciples themselves. Review the last day of Jesus' life from the standpoint of the disciples, beginning with the Last Supper. Try to realize their feelings upon the dark Sabbath (the day after the crucifixion), and then when they were assured that Jesus lived.

As far as you can, compare the Gospel stories, their differences, their agreement. Note the one joyous conviction that runs through them all.

Read Paul's account and see what this conviction meant in the early church, and how the hope of the early church rested upon it.

Consider what the Easter faith means for us to-day. Take the five suggestions made in the discussion one by one: Christ as the true Word of God to men; the cross as God's deed, and not an accident; Christ as a present power, the assurance of Christ's triumph, the assurance of our own life to come. In each case ask yourself the question, What difference would it make in this matter if Christ had not been raised? Should not each of these questions then lead us to a prayer of thanksgiving to Him who raised Jesus from the grave?

CHAPTER XXV

A REVIEW

For one who has not simply read but has studied such a course as this, a review is a task of equal pleasure and profit. It is not necessary that it shall cover the whole course, or that we seek to recall everything we have learned. It is a great satisfaction, however, to call to mind the outlines of our work, to gather up its chief results, and to see how much we have gained. Such a review fixes results and assures us of permanent profit. But it does more. Now that we have covered the whole, we have gained a knowledge which lights up each single lesson and shows us its meaning more clearly than we could possibly see it at first.

The Plan of the Life

Before we review the events of Jesus' life, let us ask first as to its purpose and plan. Jesus came to bring the kingdom of God upon earth, and to make men ready for its coming. But how was he to do that? John's work was very simple; he announced that the Kingdom was at hand and called the people to repentance. Jesus saw a larger task.

1. It was his task to teach. The people did not know what the Kingdom meant. How could they know what the rule of God would mean when they did not know God? He must, therefore, show them God and what the life in the Kingdom meant.

2. His second task was to lead men into this life, to prepare them for the coming of the Kingdom. To this end he must call men to repent, and to turn to God in humility and trust.

3. He was to serve men and to save men. The Kingdom meant the overturn and overcoming of all evil. That was

still in the future, but his presence meant a beginning of this. Such beginnings could be seen in the overthrow of physical and mental ills, in the cure of the sick and the demoniacs. It could be seen in the forgiveness of men, which meant their deliverance from the rule of sin. Healing and forgiving were therefore to be a part of his work in bringing in the Kingdom. It was a quiet beginning, like the hidden leaven or the almost invisible mustard seed, but it meant a real presence of God's rule.

4. He must train a group of men for the future work in the Kingdom. These men must be his special companions and receive his special instruction.

5. He must show himself to the people as Messiah, and call upon them to accept him and to follow him. He could not do this at first, for the people, with their earthly and political ideas of the Kingdom, were not ready. When and how he should proclaim himself was one of his problems.

Such, it seems, was the work to which Jesus looked forward at the beginning, and to these ends he remained true. We have seen how he looked to the Father for guidance as to the way by which he should reach these ends. Following that way, he saw that the road led to Jerusalem and death and that his death was to be his last and greatest service. From this study of Jesus' purpose and plan we turn to the life and note the great steps by which these were carried out. The numbers in parenthesis refer to the chapters.

The Beginnings—Chapters IV to VI

John.—Down by the Jordan a great prophet begins his work. He rouses all Israel by announcing that the long-looked-for Kingdom is at hand. Then, in searching word, he calls them to repent as the necessary preparation (IV).

The Baptism and Call.—In northern Galilee the boy Jesus has grown up in perfect fellowship with the Father, his heart full of God and the thought of the promised deliverance. He hears of this prophet John and of his call to repentance. He goes and listens. He knows this man is of God and offers himself for baptism. In that hour

he receives a new baptism of the Spirit of God and the assurance that he himself is the looked-for deliverer (V).

The Wilderness.—Moved to the depths of his being, Jesus withdraws from men that he may face his great task in meditation and prayer. The question of how he shall do his work is the occasion for temptations, but also for his great decision. He will not win recognition by working wonders, such as casting himself from a temple pinnacle. He will not make any compromise in order to win power, for that would be worshiping the prince of this world instead of God. And he will not try to save himself from any peril, even from death by hunger. He will simply do his Father's will and trust (VI).

The Galilæan Ministry—Chapters VII to XI

Not in Judæa, but in his own Galilee, Jesus begins his public work. We may ask two questions about this work in Galilee: What did Jesus do? What was the result?

Preaching.—Jesus begins his work simply and quietly as a traveling preacher, with headquarters at Capernaum. From village to village he goes teaching men about God and the Kingdom and the true life, and calling them to repent (VII).

Healing.—He takes up his work of service, especially to the sick and the demoniacs. While this stirs great enthusiasm, Jesus refuses to become a mere healer, or to perform wonders in order to win followers (VIII).

Forgiving.—At the same time Jesus carries on his ministry to the sinful. Among those who turn to him are social outcasts, like the tax gatherers and harlots, as well as many common folks who had given up trying to be religious because of the burden of endless rules imposed by the scribes. His association with these people rouses bitter hostility with the scribes and Pharisees (IX).

The Twelve.—To his teaching, healing, and forgiving Jesus joins a fourth work—training. He chooses a few men that they may go with him and that he may prepare them for future work (X).

Results in Galilee.—Such were Jesus' methods in this Galilæan ministry. What were the results? (1) Great popularity with the people. This had no real religious depth, however. (2) Misunderstanding from his friends, his townspeople, and even his own family. (3) Bitter opposition from the leaders because he healed upon the Sabbath, disregarded their other rules, and associated with "sinners." (4) The love of many humble folks whom he had healed in body and soul, and the loyal trust of the twelve and other disciples (XI).

Days of Wandering—Chapters XII to XIV

We might call this "Days Apart with the Twelve," for that was the special significance of this period in the plan of Jesus.

In Gentile Lands.—Because of his failure with the people, his open break with the leaders, and the plots against his life, Jesus at last leaves Galilee. He wanders now in Gentile lands, although he does not begin a ministry to the Gentiles (XII).

The Confession.—There follow now weeks of fellowship and training for the twelve, whose fruit is seen in Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah. The simple incident is the turning point in Jesus' work (XIII).

Trial and Triumph.—Jesus at once begins to prepare the disciples for that end of suffering and death which he had already foreseen. It is a time of trial and crisis for Jesus. The fate of John and of other prophets has helped to make clear what his own end is to be. The "suffering servant" of Isaiah suggests how his own suffering and death may serve God's end and the saving of men. In need of guidance and strength he goes up into the mountain to pray with his three friends. The mount of conflict becomes a mount of triumph and transfiguration (XIV).

Facing Jerusalem—Chapter XV

The Last Journey.—From the far north Jesus turns toward Jerusalem, with but a brief visit to the old scenes

in Galilee. He must offer himself as Messiah in the city of his people, though he knows it will mean death. The disciples protest, but they remain faithful and follow. On his way Jesus carries on his work of teaching and serving as before. He shows his disciples what is the law of life and the demand of the Kingdom: to gain one's life by giving it, to serve instead of ruling, and to count nothing one's own since it belongs to God and his kingdom (XV).

The Last Days—Chapters XVI to XXIV

The last days at Jerusalem cover but a week, from the Sunday of the entry to the Sunday of the resurrection—a week of conflict and suffering between these two days of triumph. But what crowded and momentous days make up this week! Instead of trying to recall the events in order, we will look at the important aspects of this week as it bears upon Jesus' work for the Kingdom.

1. Jesus offers himself to the people as Messiah. He does not do it in so many words, but he makes it clear for any who would see. He declares it in the acted parable of the entry (XVI), in the spoken parable of the vineyard (XVII), and finally before the council.

2. He warns and appeals, pointing out what is in store for the city (XVII).

3. He denounces the false leaders of the people. His attack upon the priests was in the cleansing of the temple (XVI); that upon the scribes and Pharisees was in repeated addresses (XVIII). In this again he is simply appealing to the people and trying to save them by turning them from their false leaders to the true Messiah.

4. He prepares his disciples for the future. He warns them of coming trials, urging them to prayer and watchfulness and faithfulness in service (XIX). He tells them again of his death, and tries to show them its meaning. In the symbols of bread and wine taken from the table at their last supper he sets forth how his life is to be given for them, and how his death is to establish a new covenant of God's loving purpose (XX).

5. He seals his devotion to men and his obedience to God in a night of conflict and a day of suffering and death. The struggle in Gethsemane, the injustice and mockery and shame of his trials before the council and Pilate and Herod, the agony of scourging, and the death on the cross, all come within but little more than half a day (XXI to XXIII).

6. He rises from the dead. The Christ whom his disciples remember is the Jesus of Nazareth, and they dwell upon his wonderful words and the memory of his gracious deeds; but they think of him, not as a friend in the past, but as risen Lord sitting upon the right hand of God, giving to men the Holy Spirit, coming again in triumph to reign (XXIV).

Directions for Study

No chapter will reward study more richly than this review. Together with the next chapter which also looks back over our course, it gives the opportunity to sum up results and conclusions, to fix them in our minds for permanent enrichment, and to see their meaning for thought and life.

Read the Gospel of Mark. It can be done easily in an hour. It is the oldest Gospel, and the shortest. It gives the deeds of our Lord rather than his teaching, and it gives the arrangement of the events in order of time better than any of the others. If you cannot read every chapter, go through it and read the most important.

Make a rough outline for yourself as you read. Note at least the following main divisions: The Ministry in Galilee; Beyond the Borders of Israel (Mark 7. 24); On the Way to Jerusalem (see 10. 1 and 10. 32); and The Last Week. After this review of Mark's Gospel, go back and read this chapter.

Try to answer these two main questions: (1) What was the life task which Jesus set for himself? (2) By what steps did he accomplish his end?

CHAPTER XXVI

THE ACHIEVEMENT AND THE CHALLENGE OF JESUS' LIFE

We have studied the life of Jesus and followed it till his death. We have one more question to ask: What did he accomplish by his life? When on that dark day he cried out, "It is finished," what had he done? For the purpose of this lesson we will put the question in simpler form and ask: What did Jesus leave behind?

The Heritage

The Teaching.—Jesus left his teaching. "Never man spake like this man," was what they said in his day, and the years have made his teaching only the more wonderful. He spoke in simplest words, so that children might understand, and yet no man ever set forth such profound truths. He never proposed a system of philosophy or theology, and yet we take from him the answers to the deepest questions of life. When we want to speak our highest knowledge of God we take his word, Father. When we try to express our true relation to others it is in his term, brother. When we think of what we should be and may be, we remember his teaching and call ourselves God's children. And the highest hope upon which we can venture, the faith in God's mercy and care in this world and in the life with the Father beyond, both rest upon him. Other writings grow old, but the book of his words that has guided men for nearly nineteen hundred years has increasing authority with each new generation.

The Life.—Jesus left behind his life. The world has many treasures, but none more precious than his memory. It stands before our selfish, sordid, anxious lives, rebuk-

ing us and smiting our guilty souls. It shines above our littleness and weakness, and lures us on by showing once for all what manhood may be. And when our faith grows weak, we look again and see not man but God, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The world's greatest revelation alike of God and man is the life of Jesus Christ.

The Leaders.—Jesus left behind a group of trained men. How imperfect they were we have seen. To the last they had their selfish ambitions and their narrow ideas. But the stamp of Jesus' spirit was upon them, he had bound them to him in absolute loyalty, and they saw the meaning of his teaching and his work after his death. It was these men who kept alive the memory of his life and words and handed them down to us. It was these men who went out to preach the good news. They became the rock upon which he built his church.

The Fellowship.—Jesus left behind a fellowship. We might call it a church, but that would be misleading. They were not organized. They had no formal creed, nor even formal officials at first, though the twelve were their natural leaders. They did not, indeed, think of themselves at first as a new and separate organization distinct from the Jewish church. But from the first there was this fellowship, and that was the vital matter, as it is still in the church. They had a common faith in Christ, and they were joined by a common spirit of love. That fellowship spread in a few short years throughout the Roman world. It overcame the barriers of race and rank and ancient prejudice. It has outlasted the centuries, and it spans the whole earth to-day.

The Spirit in Others.—Jesus left behind his own spirit in the lives of others. It means much that such a life as that of Jesus was once lived on earth; it means more that that life was reproduced in others. The men and women of the New Testament all unite in one testimony, that their life has come to them through Jesus Christ. The greatest of them declared: "Christ liveth in me." "For me to live is Christ." When they asserted that there was none

other name given under heaven wherein they must be saved, they were simply confessing their own experience. He filled the sky of their faith. Their thought of God, their ideal of life, their hope for all the future were alone in him. But that was not all. They were men of a new spirit and a new life and they confessed with joy that the life was all from him. And we, looking back, can see it. His trust in God, his loyalty, his joy and hope, his love and good will toward men, all these we find in them. Some of them had been narrow Jews like Paul. Others came from the lowest classes of the Roman world. Not that they became perfect saints; yet with their joyous hope and brotherly love they shine forth in that old decadent world like stars in the darkness of night.

The Gospels.—And Jesus gave to the world the Gospels. We cannot strictly say, of course, that he left them behind, for no word had been written at his death, and the earliest of the Gospels in its present form did not come for a generation. Jesus himself wrote but once, and then with his finger upon the perishable dust. He gave no directions for writing down his words or the record of his life. And yet he is the creator of these Gospels. He had stamped upon the minds of these men his unforgettable words. He had lived the life which they held in memory as their greatest treasure. When they went forth to preach, they knew no better way than to tell the story of his life. When they wanted to instruct their converts or their children, they used his words. So they kept them in memory during the first years until those came who wrote them down for their day and ours.

The Holy Spirit.—To all these gifts that Jesus left, the men of the early church would have added one other: the gift of the Holy Spirit. And while it does not strictly belong in our study, we must at least refer to it here. They felt that the gift of the Holy Spirit was through Christ alone. That gift, indeed, could have come at no other time and in no other way. The Spirit came through Christ; it was such a Spirit of holiness and love as they had known in Jesus. And Jesus henceforth was to be present, not as

person in one place, but as Spirit in the hearts of all his followers. The conviction of the resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit were the two pillars upon which there rose that victorious early church, with all its faith and courage and love.

The Achievement

The Wonder of the Life.—The wonder of Jesus' achievement appears the greater the more we study it. Here is one who lived till manhood in a little provincial village. His public ministry was but two or three years at the most. Not one word of his message was written down in his lifetime. He left no set of doctrines, no system of rules or laws, no organization. When he went from earth he left nothing behind but the few garments for which the soldiers gambled, and probably in that northern village, shaped by his carpenter toil, some rude beams in Nazareth houses, and some ruder plows of wood such as her peasants used.

The Master.—And yet we think of Jesus with right, not simply as a beautiful spirit, but as the great creative power of history. We reverence to-day the man that does, the man who creates: captain of industry, inventor, statesman, engineer. But when we turn from the lesser to the higher, from the realm of things to the kingdom of the soul, then there is only one Master and his name is Jesus. He is Master in the empire of faith; men see God to-day as Jesus showed him, men pray to God by the name he taught them. He is the ruler of conscience; we have no higher ideal for our conduct than that which he gave in his word and life, we have no higher standard for the life of man with man than his spirit. He is the Lord of our hopes. We dare to cry for pardon because he has made us believe in the mercy of God. We ask for help and trust in God's love because we believe that God himself was in that love and mercy which Jesus showed on earth. And we dare to face the future because of him; he has made us believe in a new world of righteousness and peace where he shall rule, and in that other world where we shall be with him in our Father's house. But we do not wait for some future age

to show his power; day by day we bring our guilt of conscience, our selfishness of life, our weakness of will, and he sends us forth through the help of his Spirit to walk in newness of life.

The Eternal Christ.—And the world will never outgrow him. Each upward step, so far from leaving him behind, only shows more clearly the heights that he presents for our achievement.

The Challenge

His Life as Rebuke and Challenge.—The achievement of Jesus' life, as well as his character, would seem to set him wholly apart from us. And yet as we look at that life it comes to us constantly with a challenge. It says to us: This is how you should live; this is what you should be. The greatness of other men often separates them from us; the greatness of Jesus brings him near and summons us to be like him. We wonder that one so far above us should be for our imitation, until we realize that Jesus is as much the true revelation of man as of God. That, indeed, is the final test of the Christian: is he Christlike? "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The life of Jesus is the rebuke, the challenge, and the invitation to our lives to-day. To make this clear, we will consider a few outstanding features of his character.

His Faith.—Look first at his spirit of faith, his utter trust in God. He would not change stones to bread in fear of starving. He would not flee danger. He did not shun the cross. Beset by constant danger, there was an atmosphere of quiet and strength even in the terrible closing days. In all things he trusted his Father, and trusted absolutely. How that life rebukes the fears that make us weak and the anxieties that rob us of peace. How it challenges us to fling our whole life upon God, joyful in his care, confident as we trust his great purpose for us and for his world.

His Obedience.—Then there was his obedience, the utter loyalty of his life. Like the needle that turns to its pole, his will was set toward God. He did not ask about safety

or success. That will was his joy and strength, not a burden; he called it indeed his meat and drink. What a rebuke to our divided lives, which want to be good and yet keep an eye turned toward other ends as well. What a rebuke to those negative, impotent folks whose only goodness lies in not doing much evil. What a call to take sides with God in the great fight, to make God and righteousness the passion of an undivided life.

His Good Will.—If we choose but one more outstanding trait, it must be his good will toward men. By this we do not mean a mild benevolence or a general sentiment of kindliness. It was a great passion, so gracious and tender that it drew the least and the weakest, so mighty in its concern for the oppressed that the wicked trembled at its indignation, so divine that its presence meant life, so utterly devoted that it led at last to the cross. It did not depend upon what men were. It was great enough to include the evil and unlovely, the loathsome leper, the hated taxgatherer, the woman of the street. Nor could any deed of man overcome it, not the enmity of priest and Pharisee who hounded him to death, nor the brutality of the soldiers who plied the scourge and drove the nails. Before such love we stand humbled and ashamed. We love those that love us, those of our class or creed or kind. We exact a toll of gratitude when we perform service for others. And how much of suspicion and prejudice and hatred there is still left in this year of the great war! Have we prayed for the English and the Germans, for the Turks as for the French, not for success of arms, but for the welfare of all these our brethren? What a challenge it is to our day, this love of Jesus that cuts across all lines that divide, and knows in men only the children of one Father, our brothers who need!

Directions for Study

Read Acts 10. 36-43.

The whole New Testament is a witness to the achievement of Jesus' life. As you read the discussion of "The Heritage," take your New Testament and find for each point an illustration of your own. Turn to some passage that illustrates

the greatness of his teaching, perhaps in the Sermon on the Mount. Find some special incident which shows the beauty of his life and spirit.

Consider Paul as an illustration of the transforming power of Christ, and read 1 Corinthians 13 as a portrayal of the spirit of Christ. Paul does not mention the name of Jesus in this chapter, and yet this is as true a picture as may be found in the Gospels.

After studying what is said under "The Challenge," add to this other qualities and characteristics of Jesus such as his courage, his patience, his friendliness, his reverence. Ask yourself what these mean as a challenge to your own life.

What have you gained from this course: (1) in your conception of the character of Jesus; (2) in your understanding of what he did; (3) in respect to what he means to you personally?

Looking at the world of to-day: Where do you see the influence of the spirit and ideals of Jesus? What are the great needs which he must yet meet?

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